

Obama to request big DOD budget hike

By ANDREW TAYLOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will ask Congress for a hefty, almost 8 percent boost for the Pentagon in fiscal 2016, including \$5.3 billion to equip and train Iraqi soldiers and moderate Syrian rebels to fight Islamic State militants in the Middle East.

Obama will ask for \$534 billion for the core budget of the Defense Department — a \$38 billion increase — according to “pre-decisional” Pentagon documents obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press. That means there

‘The sequester is hurting our national security and undermining our defense.’

Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

could be some slight changes when the budget actually comes out Monday.

An additional \$51 billion would go for “overseas contingency operations,” including \$43 billion for ongoing operations in Afghanistan

— despite a steady troop drawdown — and \$3.8 billion to train Afghan security forces.

The Pentagon’s base budget is currently \$496 billion, with an additional \$64 billion for overseas missions.

The Pentagon witnessed major budget cuts with the imposition of so-called budget sequestration in 2013 and has been held at a freeze since then. Military brass say the bleaker budgets have forced cuts in flying hours, troop training and maintenance of military equipment. The agency was due for just a \$3 billion increase under caps set in a 2011 budget pact.

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Pay, benefits panel recommends killing 20-year retirement

Service chiefs say defense caps would undercut morale

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COUNTRY IN CRISIS

Afghanistan faces economic dilemma as international aid money leaves, growth stalls

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An Afghan money changer, right, counts a pile of currency at the Money and Exchange Market in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Jan. 12.

MASSOUD HOSSAINI/AP

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Air Force staff sergeant found guilty of murder in death of AFN tech

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SUPER BOWL XLIX

Marshawn Lynch on media day: ‘I’m here so I don’t get fined’

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I was attacked yesterday morning by a very rarely seen or experienced animal called 'chupacabra.' I fought with it for hours. ... I threw him off the 23rd floor. So we'll never see him again. Thank you for understanding."

— Actor Johnny Depp, at a press conference in Japan

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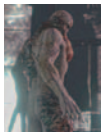
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5. Army: Reports of decision to charge Bergdahl with desertion 'patently false'

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Video games

"Resident Evil"



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MILITARY

Army: No rush to judge Bergdahl

General carefully reviewing report on soldier's disappearance from Afghan post

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Army and Pentagon officials said Tuesday there has been no decision on what, if any, criminal charges will be filed against Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the soldier who left his post in Afghanistan and was held by the Taliban for five years before being released in a prisoner exchange.

Gen. Mark Milley, head of U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., has a broad range of legal options, including various degrees of desertion charges. A major consideration is whether military officials will be able to prove that Bergdahl had no intention of ever returning to his unit — a key element in the more serious desertion charges.

The case is also fraught with politics. Some members of Congress and former members of Bergdahl's unit criticized the Obama administration for trading someone they considered a deserter for five top Taliban commanders held at the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. If Bergdahl is severely punished, that trade could be called into question again. On the other hand, some believe that five years in Taliban captivity is punishment enough.

At a Tuesday afternoon briefing with reporters, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, Rear Adm. John Kirby, emphasized the point. "Let me just put a fork in this right now ... No decision has been made with respect to the case of Sgt. Bergdahl. None," he said. "And there is no timeline to make that decision. And Gen. Milley is not being put under any pressure to make a decision, either way."

Kirby said Wednesday that Milley is proceeding "very, very deliberately and in a measured way."

Appearing on MSNBC, Kirby said that Bergdahl "has not been charged. There is no pressure or rush to judgment here ... and we just have to let this decision play out." Kirby said that a decision "is not imminent."

Kirby's comments came after news outlets reported that Bergdahl was going to face desertion charges. The Army responded after two news organizations reported the news.

"The reporting from Fox News and NBC on Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is patently false," the Army said in a statement emailed late Tuesday. "To be clear there have been no actions or decisions on the Sgt. Bergdahl investigation."

Should the Army decide to pursue charges, here is a list of possible charges and possible punishments:

Absent without leave. This would be one of the least serious offenses. Tens of thousands of soldiers have walked away from their posts over the last decade, some for a few hours, others for a weekend or even weeks. Usually if servicemembers are charged with being AWOL, the assumption is that they intended to return to duty. Often they get some type of administrative punishment. In more serious cases they are discharged.

Because Bergdahl was in a war zone, leaving his combat post is a more serious offense than leaving a U.S. military base without authorization for a few days. So officials are likely to go for a more serious charge.

Desertion with intent to avoid hazardous duty or to shirk important service. This is one of the more likely charges. It is more serious than AWOL because it involves deserting a hazardous duty, which includes combat service. Bergdahl left his post during a combat deployment in Paktika province, a far more



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Gen. Mark Milley, head of U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., has not made a decision on whether Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, above, will face charges after leaving his post in 2009.

critical violation because officials could argue that his sudden absence could have endangered other unit members. The charge does not require the military to prove Bergdahl had no intention of returning to his unit.

Desertion with intent to remain away permanently. This charge is less likely because the Army would have to be able to prove that Bergdahl left his post and at some point decided he had no intention of returning. Former Army lawyer Greg Rinckey said that would be difficult, particularly since he was taken prisoner by the Taliban and couldn't return to his post even if he wanted to.

Failure to obey a lawful order. This charge and other similar infractions are also likely to be added to bolster the contention that Bergdahl violated regulations and committed a serious breach of military conduct. The military will want to note that deserting a post during wartime, whatever the mitigating circumstances, cannot be condoned.

Possible punishments. Desertion in a time of war with the intent to stay away is punishable by death. That outcome is almost inconceivable in this case. Only one servicemember, Pvt. Eddie Slovik, has been executed for desertion since the Civil War. Slovik, 24, was shot by a firing squad in January 1945 but his execution, approved by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, was kept secret for nine years.

Desertion with the intent to avoid a certain duty or shirk a certain service, a more likely charge, carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, along with a dishonorable discharge and forfeiture of all pay and benefits.

AWOL can carry a broad range of punishments, ranging from a letter in a servicemember's file, getting extra duties or having pay docked to getting thrown out of the service.

Depending on the charges and court-martial proceedings, Bergdahl could receive an honorable, general or other-than-honorable discharge. That decision can determine whether he loses his rank, or whether he gets as much as \$300,000 in back pay and other benefits, including continued health care.

Legal process. Milley is reviewing the results of an investigation by Maj. Gen. Kenneth R. Dahl, and there is no estimated timeline for a decision. Milley can refer charges to a general court-martial or decide not to charge Bergdahl at all.

If Milley recommends charges and court-martial, Bergdahl and his lawyer, military justice expert Eugene Fidell, can also try to plea bargain. Military leaders are likely to take into consideration Bergdahl's five years in enemy hands and could also consider any potential need for continued health or mental health care.

Stars and Stripes editor Patrick Dickson contributed to this report.

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WAR/MILITARY

Hope for Afghan economy seems spent

Crisis looms in land of war and corruption as foreign aid dollars depart with foreign troops

By RAHIM FAIEZ
AND LYNNE O'DONNELL
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's fragile economy has lost around a third of its value in the past year as international aid organizations that poured in cash for more than a decade have drastically scaled back after Western forces effectively ended their 13-year war against the Taliban.

Assuming power in September amid a continuing Taliban insurgency, President Ashraf Ghani inherited a moribund economy and an electorate weary of endemic corruption and soaring unemployment. Economists, analysts and officials agree that the economic challenge has been compounded by the Western handover of security to Afghan forces, completed at the end of last month, whose effect has left key sectors lacking investment and struggling for funds.

Economic growth that was above 14 percent in 2012 will fall to just 1.4 percent this year, the World Bank predicts. In recent months, fears about the state of the economy have outstripped security concerns in opinion polls taken across the country.

The Central Bank spends tens of millions of dollars weekly to stem the fall of the afghani as money continues to leave the country, traders said, reflecting a general lack of confidence in the government's ability to introduce reforms, stimulate growth, guarantee security and cut corruption.

At Kabul's Saraye Shahzada money market, traders dealing in dollars, rubles, euros, rials, rupees and dirhams are concerned about capital flight.

"At least twice a week, the Central Bank sells \$40 million to \$50 million to support the afghani," said Mohammad Khan Baz, the market's manager. "If the government doesn't pay attention to security and provide opportunities for investors, I am afraid that the economic situation for ordinary people will go from bad to worse."

Imports vastly outstrip exports, Ghani recently told parliament, exacerbating the country's dependence on financial support from international partners — who are already spending billions annually on the military and police.

‘Even though a lot of projects are half-completed — not only office blocks but hospitals, clinics, schools and roads all over the country — the money has simply run out and everything has closed down.’

Hamid Sahak
former construction engineer in Afghanistan



Afghan authorities had four years' notice that the U.S. military, which spent more than \$1 trillion between 2001 and 2014, would close most bases and withdraw combat troops at the end of last year. About a third of Afghanistan's population lived close enough to a military base to benefit from its presence. On top of war costs, the U.S. spent more than \$100 billion on development.

Construction, one of the few industries that offered employment

outside of aid projects, has stalled with half-finished buildings dotting the capital and other cities. Kabul rents, once among the world's highest, have plummeted.

Former construction engineer Hamid Sahak, 38, said he noticed the downturn creeping up more than a year ago.

"Even though a lot of projects are half-completed — not only office blocks but hospitals, clinics, schools and roads all over the country — the money has simply run out and everything has closed down," he said.

Afghanistan's dependency on international funding for development in the decade after the Taliban were toppled in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion led to widespread corruption that stifled industrial growth, experts say. Opium continues to be the country's biggest earner, with the United Nations saying it brings in close to \$3 billion a year — enriching mobsters

Above: Afghan money changers wait for customers earlier this month at the Money and Exchange Market in Kabul. Afghanistan's economy has suffered as international organizations have drastically reduced financial aid. Left: A money changer counts a pile of currency at the Money and Exchange Market.

PHOTOS BY MASSOUD HOSSAIN/AP

and funding insurgents.

By contrast, the Finance Ministry said 2014 government revenues were just over \$2 billion — 25 percent lower than initial projections. Abdul Qadir Jaillani, the ministry's spokesman, attributed the lower-than-expected revenues to "the long election process, the fall in overall investment, trade and business across the country, the negative impact of the end of the international combat mission, and concerns about the ability of the Afghan security forces to take on the insurgency."

Afghanistan's security forces have been leading the fight against the insurgency since mid-2014. Since Dec. 31, they have been fighting largely alone. A support contingent of 13,500 foreign troops, mostly Americans, will remain through this year.

Wafilah Iftakhar, head of the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency, said entrepreneurs were delaying investments as they waited for positive signs that the government is tackling corruption and cutting red tape.

"Investors have stopped most of their activities or have cut their turnover, which has had a serious impact on the economy, contributing to the rise in unemployment," he said. "Many companies that had been contracted to NATO have downsized and factories have cut production, so overall we think that investment

is down 30 to 35 percent in 2014 compared to the year before."

Foreign investment was practically zero, he said, mainly due to political instability surrounding the election process — which lasted most of 2014 and ended in a compromise as the two main candidates, Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, formed a "national unity government."

Ghani's recent announcement of Cabinet nominees, almost four months after taking office, contributed to a minor boost in confidence, Jaillani said. Afghanistan's 2015 revenue target of \$2.17 billion is expected to come from "customs, mines and telecommunications, passport distribution, ID cards, vehicle registration and others," he said.

Mining, long touted as the economic bedrock of future development, is yet to draw serious foreign investment as global mining companies are put off by violence and lack of infrastructure.

In the meantime, criminal gangs are looting mines and selling minerals to neighboring countries at a fraction of global prices — undermining potential for the government to exploit the estimated \$3 trillion in mineral and petrochemical resources, according to reports by the anti-corruption watchdog organization Integrity Watch Afghanistan.

EUROPE

AF staff sergeant found guilty in AFN murder case

By MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Air Force Staff Sgt. Sean Oliver was found guilty of unpremeditated murder Wednesday in the killing of Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Dmitry Chepusov, an American Forces Network broadcaster.

Oliver had been charged with premeditated murder, but the military panel deciding his fate — similar to a civilian jury — was allowed to consider lesser charges. Despite the conviction of the less serious offense, he still could face life in prison.

Oliver, a broadcast technician for AFN, also was found guilty of obstruction of justice and making false official statements related to Chepusov's murder. The panel also found him guilty of other charges stemming from a separate assault in Ohio in 2012.

The sentencing phase of the trial is scheduled to start Thursday.

The panel returned its verdict after just over five hours of de-



Oliver

liberations — roughly an hour longer than it took the government and defense to deliver their closing arguments.

In wrapping up the prosecution's case Tuesday after nearly two weeks of testimony and presentation of evidence, senior prosecutor Lt. Col. Brian Thompson described a timeline of events, beginning with Facebook messages between Oliver and Chepusov's estranged wife, Karla Alejandra Zolezzi.

Zolezzi and Oliver both testified in the trial that they were in a sexual relationship, though they offered differing accounts of the status of their relationship at the time of Chepusov's murder, which occurred at the apartment of another AFN colleague after a night of drinking.

Oliver testified that he choked Chepusov after the sailor said he

was going to go home and have sex with Zolezzi, even if she didn't want to. Oliver said he was trying to protect Zolezzi from what he perceived as a rape threat.

Thompson said Chepusov had no way of knowing where Zolezzi was at the time of the alleged threat. Zolezzi hadn't seen Chepusov since before Thanksgiving 2013, she testified, and had spent the four days before the murder at Oliver's house. Oliver dropped her off at the on-base apartment she shared with Chepusov hours before the murder — after the sailor had left the apartment for a night on the town with Oliver and other AFN colleagues, Zolezzi testified.

The only person who knew Zolezzi's whereabouts at the time of the murder was Oliver, Thompson said. He accused the airman of engaging in "character assassination" against Chepusov and of changing his story multiple times in order to counter the evidence authorities had against him.

German police found Chepusov's body in the passenger seat of Oliver's car during an



American Forces Network video

Air Force Staff Sgt. Sean Oliver will be sentenced Thursday after being found guilty of unpremeditated murder in the 2013 death of Petty Officer 2nd Class Dmitry Chepusov, above, in Germany.

early-morning traffic stop on Dec. 14, 2013, in Kaiserslautern. He told German police and Air Force investigators that he'd found Chepusov walking drunk in downtown Kaiserslautern, and that he was driving the sailor home when he was stopped.

Oliver later told Air Force investigators that he choked Chepusov to stop him from attacking him, but planned only to knock him out, not kill him, and that he believed the sailor was alive when he put him in the car.

On the stand Friday, Oliver maintained that he didn't intend to kill Chepusov, and he panicked when he suspected the sailor was dead. He said that he didn't

check to confirm that suspicion, but he was on his way to dump Chepusov's body when he was stopped by police.

German and American pathologists concluded in separate autopsies that Chepusov died of strangulation. Oliver had pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Oliver also was charged with aggravated assault and obstructing proceedings for a separate incident in Ohio in 2012. The panel found him guilty of the obstruction charge and of a lesser charge of assault consummated by battery.

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ARIZONA SUPER BOWL 2015 XLIX

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Game Start at 8:30 a.m.
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7:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. \$9.95 / person
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THE NEW SANNO

MILITARY

Soldier's wife slashed children's throats to quiet them, police say

The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A Washington state woman accused of stabbing her three small children told detectives she cut the children's throats with a kitchen knife to keep them quiet for her soldier husband, a prosecutor said Monday.

Christina Booth, 29, of Olympia, said in the police interview that her husband, Thomas Booth, never helped her with the children and got "very annoyed" when they cried, Thurston County Deputy Prosecutor Craig Juris said in a probable cause document filed in court. The children include a 2-year-old toddler and 6-month-old twins.

Bail was set Monday at \$3 million. The woman was arrested early Sunday for investigation of attempted murder. The prosecutor's office said Monday she has not been formally charged. An email request for comment sent to a lawyer who was with her at the bail hearing was not immediately returned.

The children were reported stable Sunday after surgery at a hospital. The hospital isn't releasing

'Christina said she knew if she killed all of the kids, the house would be quiet for Thomas.'

from probable cause document

ing updates on their condition because of federal privacy law. They have been placed in the custody of state Child Protective Services.

Thomas Booth told police his wife had been "very stressed out" raising the children and was on medication for post-partum depression, according to court papers. He said he and his wife had watched a movie at home Saturday night and each had two large glasses of wine. He described his wife as sufficiently intoxicated that she was slurring her words.

According to the detectives' account, Christina Booth said she had been having a tough time caring for the children. She said her husband "never helps her with the children and that Thomas

gets very annoyed when the children cry and make noise," detectives said in the probable cause account.

The woman said the twins started crying after she took the toddler to bed and "she hit her breaking point," the document said. She described going downstairs to get a knife from the dishwasher, then cutting her toddler daughter's throat with a knife and covering her with blankets so she would be hidden. She then described cutting the twins' throats.

"Christina said she knew if she killed all of the kids, the house would be quiet for Thomas," the probable cause document said she told detectives. "During the interview, Christina broke down crying several times, yelled about Thomas never helping with the kids and vomited once. Christina made the comment 'they will be quiet now' several times."

Police have said Thomas Booth is not suspected of a crime.

He told detectives that he found the injured twins after he saw his wife wearing only her underwear, crying and screaming, a short time after she took the little girl upstairs to put her to bed. He said



ANDY HOBBS, THE OLYMPIAN/AP

In this photo taken from a video monitor, Christina Booth is arraigned in Thurston County Superior Court in Olympia, Wash., on Monday. Booth is accused of trying to kill her three small children.

he grabbed his medical kit and started trying to stop the twins' bleeding with gauze while yelling at his wife to call 911. Thomas Booth said he saw the toddler in her bed but didn't see anything wrong with her.

Thomas Booth is with the 1st Special Forces Group at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, said Sgt. Michael Sword in the public affairs office. A message was left seeking comment from Thomas Booth.

Letter: Pot shops off limits to military

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Dozens of recreational marijuana businesses in Washington state have been sent letters from the military saying the shops are off limits to all members of the armed forces, an official said Tuesday.

The letters, dated Jan. 21, say military personnel will be indefinitely prohibited from entering such a business unless its owner agrees to stop selling substances similar to marijuana.

A total of 86 letters have been sent to businesses with licenses to sell recreational marijuana under voter-approved Initiative 502, said Joe Kubistek, a spokesman for Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

"Despite the passage of Initiative 502, the use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of marijuana remains illegal for all service members, at all times and locations," Kubistek said in an email.

Hilary Brickner, a Seattle attorney, said two of the marijuana businesses she represents had received the letters. She said the shops have no responsibility to inquire about the military status of their customers, but noted that some operators were concerned about repercussions.

"The Army is totally powerless to do anything to these businesses, but that doesn't stop my clients from breaking out," she said.

From The Associated Press

Celebrate the Week With Yokosuka MWR

Officers' Club 243-5030

Adjusted Hours of Operation

From now through April 30, the Deli, Kosano Dining Room and Warehouse Restaurant will be closed due to renovations. During this time, the Kurofune Lounge, Cash Cage and Slot Machine Room will be operating on adjusted hours: Kurofune Lounge - Sunday through Thursday from 1600 to 2300 and Saturday & Sunday from 1600 to 0100. Cash Cage & Slot Machine Room - Open daily from 1000 to 2300.

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Super Bowl XLIX:

Seattle Seahawks vs. New England Patriots

Monday, February 2, Doors open at 0600

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MILITARY

Ex-master chief guilty in prostitution scheme

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The former command master chief of the USS Germantown admitted Wednesday at a court-martial that he oversaw a prostitution research ring operated by four senior chief petty officers aboard the ship.

Command Master Chief Petty Officer Jesus Galura pleaded guilty to conspiracy to procure prostitutes, violation of a general order and making a false official statement to a law enforcement agent.

He pleaded not guilty to one count of sexual harassment and two counts of unwanted sexual contact directed toward a subordinate aboard the Sasebo, Japan-based ship.

Testimony at the trial revealed a series of sexual assault accusations involving Galura and oth-

ers that prompted the 7th Fleet to initiate an investigation of the Germantown, Amphibious Squadron 11 and Expeditionary Strike Group 7.

An investigation report later described the situation among Germantown's chiefs as "out of control," according to court testimony.

Galura testified that he and the four chiefs researched websites offering prostitution services in the Philippines, where the chiefs had expected to make a profit call.

Galura also testified that he encouraged Senior Chief Petty Officer Paul Swank, whom he said was negotiating prices, to see if the women he found would be available for parties. Swank was reduced in pay grade to E-7 after being found guilty in October of conspiracy to patronize a prostitute and a related charge.

Galura later used his ship email

to send a picture of two scantily clad women with the message, "I got my first two for the day," which was a violation of a Defense Department regulation regarding use of government communications.

Galura, who is still technically attached to Germantown but temporarily assigned to squadron shore duty, also admitted to lying about the intent of his illicit website browsing, claiming it was part of a safety briefing for sailors.

He made no excuses for his efforts at prostitution planning while entering his pleas to military judge Capt. David Harrison.

"It's hypocritical on my part, because I would tell a sailor not to do it," Galura said.

Lt. Brandon Sargent, his defense attorney, argued that the charges directed against Galura constituted unlawful command influence.

Galura's permanent removal

from Germantown was directed by the four-star Pacific Fleet command, rather than any of the lower local commands.



Galura

Cmdr. Jason Leach, the former commander of the Germantown who was relieved due to loss of confidence in his leadership, testified

Wednesday that his "gut feeling" told him Galura would be court-martialed regardless of the investigation results into his actions.

Leach also said he and his immediate superior, Capt. Heidi Agle, were never informed of Galura's removal.

"[Agle] shared an article from

Stars and Stripes in which Pacific Fleet announced the relief (of Galura)," Leach said. "I was extremely shocked. I asked her if she knew about it, and she said she did not."

Harrison ruled that no evidence thus far supported the unlawful command influence argument, since Pacific Fleet's actions were administrative in nature and their deferral to Naval Forces Japan for judicial action was proper.

Galura agreed to plead guilty to some charges Wednesday as part of a plea agreement with prosecutors.

Sentencing was deferred until the end of the trial, which is scheduled to reconvene Feb. 23. At that time, Galura will face charges that he harassed, forcibly kissed and improperly touched a subordinate.

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St. Louis (Mo.) Post-Dispatch/TNS

Drill sergeant Megan Slone trains U.S. Army recruits at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Female drill sergeants help change cadence at Mo. base

By JESSE BOGAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. — The platoon of 70 greenhorn soldiers rested on the barracks tile floor during a recent evening of Army basic combat training while their drill sergeant, Megan Slone, gave a final lesson for the day about how to sight a rifle.

Half of the soldiers had never shot a gun before, which was fine with Slone. That meant fewer bad habits to fix before qualification time.

"If you are scared to fire a weapon, that's OK," said Slone, 27, assuring the kick isn't bad and that there is ample practice time at the range. "You are going to shoot three rounds, five rounds, and then you are going to be OK. I promise. You will be fine."

The mild tempo defies the "Full Metal Jacket" image of a profane drill instructor barking out orders to terrified privates. It's exactly the kind of new relationship today's military wants to see between drill instructors and trainees.

For starters, in a military whose leadership has historically been dominated by men, Slone is a

woman. She is among nearly 500 female drill sergeants nationwide — twice as many as in 2007 — who are part of a push to not only integrate military leadership but to ensure that men in the ranks respect the authority of women.

In a wider sense, Slone's ability to show a gentler approach is consistent with a transformation of training. It's a shift designed to forge a new skill set as the nation transitions from lengthy wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today, the Army is training new soldiers to be "apprentice thinkers." Their first assignment likely won't be battle.

"The drill sergeant is more of a mentor and an instructor than an individual yelling at you," said Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Woods, senior enlisted adviser for the Center for Initial Military Training at Fort Eustis, Va., which oversees Army basic training and drill sergeant school.

That's not to say female drill sergeants are being sought out of a stereotypical view that women are softer.

Army leaders say a drill sergeant is a drill sergeant, regardless of gender.

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Seoul taxi drivers are putting out the word: Don't drink and throw up.

Tired of the yucky cleanup and complaints from other customers about the lingering stench, the capital's two drivers associations have banded together.

Beginning Feb. 1, drivers will ask passengers who vomit in their cabs to pay a standard, city-approved fine of approximately \$138.

Taxi drivers already are known for demanding an extra fee, set at the driver's discretion, on top of the regular fare if a passenger barfs inside or on the exterior of the cab. The latest move is aimed partly at standardizing the surcharge and partly at publicizing the problem.

South Korea's drinking culture encourages coworkers and friends to bond over alcohol, often inflicting to the point of intoxication.

Vomiting is common. While the fine is not legally enforceable, city and taxi association officials say they hope it will discourage drunk passengers from throwing up until they exit cabs.

"Maybe passengers are going to be more careful not to puke in taxis," an official with Seoul's Taxi Logistics Division said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

An officer with the Seoul Private Taxi Association, one of two groups representing Seoul's 72,000 taxi drivers, also speaking anonymously, said drivers get wet from cleaning up their passengers' vomit and the seats become so dirty that they're dif-

'Taxi drivers clean over and over again, but the vomit smell lasts so long that often they can't drive the taxi again the next day.'

Seoul Private Taxi Association officer
anonymous

ficult to clean.

"Taxi drivers clean over and over again, but the vomit smell lasts so long that often they can't drive the taxi again the next day," he said.

Passengers have been known to file complaints about a rotten smell even days after the vomiting occurred, often blaming their driver for the odor.

A Seoul Taxi Association survey conducted last fall found that 10,892, or 42.5 percent, of complaints filed by taxi drivers involved vomiting, according to the Korea Times.

Other complaints in the survey of nearly 4,800 taxi drivers included passengers refusing to leave the cab, refusing to pay their fare, damaging the cab, and using fake or forged cash or credit cards to pay their fare.

City officials said they did not keep statistics on how many U.S. servicemembers have vomited in taxis.

Another city official said one of the two associations wanted to impose a \$184 fine and the other wanted a \$276 fine. After discussions with the city, both agreed on \$138, intended to cover a cleaning fee and operating losses.

Passengers who refuse to pay the fine may be asked by their driver to pay an even larger fee, subject to negotiation with the driver.

If the passenger still refuses to pay, the driver could try to enforce the fine by taking them to civil court, though it is unclear whether the suit would carry weight.

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MILITARY

Service chiefs: Defense cuts will break faith with troops

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Military chiefs of staff warned the Senate on Wednesday that coming caps on defense spending will break faith with troops and hollow out the nation's all-volunteer force.

The heads of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps said servicemembers, equipment and facilities are stretched too thin and budget caps set to begin this fall could create a frustrated, poorly trained-and-equipped force like that of the post-Vietnam War era.

The testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee comes days before the White House releases its federal budget proposal and Congress launches into a debate over whether to lift defense spending limits aimed at reducing the U.S. debt.

"None of us want to return to those days of the 1970s when we had a hollow force," Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dun-

ford said.

The caps on defense spending were part of a series of deals struck by Congress to reduce federal spending. All areas of the government are targeted and under the caps. Defense would be allowed only a \$1.7 billion increase, to \$523 billion, over the next fiscal year, though leaked copies of the White House fiscal 2016 request show the Department of Defense asking for a \$38 billion increase.

Dunford said flat budgets in recent years have forced the Marines to prioritize spending on its deployed forces — about 31,000 Marines — and left half its non-deployed troops with shortfalls in personnel, equipment and training.

Further cuts would mean even less training as well as older equipment and facilities, echoing the 190,000-strong Marine Corps force a generation ago that struggled to keep high-quality personnel following a drawdown from the Vietnam War, Dunford said.

It required five to seven years of spending and investment on the military in the 1980s to recover troop morale, he said.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said only about 30 percent of that service's brigade combat teams are fully trained and ready to fight on deployment, even without the coming caps. The Army is now also planning a 65 percent drop in specialized skill training, causing a backlog of soldiers that will require years to clear out and add to the struggle to groom leadership, according to the general.

"You can't just do that (training) episodically. You have to do it in a continuous manner," Odierno said. "My concern is that as [soldiers] see ... maybe we are not going to invest in [readiness], they lose faith that we are going to give them the training and materials that they need to succeed in this incredibly complex world we face."

The frustration caused by underfunding and a lack of adequate



JOE GONIELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. testifies before the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington on Wednesday. At left is Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III.

training can cascade throughout the ranks, said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert. "You are sitting around the classroom looking at your strike fighter Hornet, and it looks really great, but it is sitting on the tarmac," Greenert said.

The idle time can lead to increased alcohol use among servicemembers and more problems for military families, he said.

Committee chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has sharply criticized reductions in military

spending amid what he says are surging global conflicts with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, as well as with Russia, Iran and China.

The United States should heed the lesson learned from the post-Vietnam drawdown and not lose quality servicemembers through a lack of funding, McCain said.

"It seems that it is always the best and the brightest who leave first," he said.

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Report: Pay, benefits panel to recommend killing 20-year retirement

Stars and Stripes

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission will release its long-awaited report Thursday that will propose fundamental changes to military benefits, including ending the 20-year retirement, Military Times reported, citing sources familiar with the report.

The plan calls for Congress to create a hybrid system of smaller defined-benefit pensions along with more cash-based benefits and lump-sum payments. A significant portion of retirement benefits would come in the form of government contributions to 401(k)-style investment accounts, those familiar with the report told Military Times.

In addition to the 401(k) for troops serving less than 20 years, the commission will suggest promising a pension to troops who serve a long-term career, but one that would be more modest than what military retirees receive today, a defense official briefed on the plan told The Times.

Unlike the current system, this pension would not start upon separation from service; instead, those payment checks would begin at a traditional retirement age, such as 60 or older, according to the official.

While retirement changes would affect only future servicemembers, changes to health care could affect those serving now.

According to The Times, the commission will also propose:

- A change to health care benefits for current military families and retirees. Three customers could move into the health care coverage provided to federal

employees.

- A new health care allowance for troops designed to cover some expenses, such as doctor visit co-pays and eyeglasses.

- A new four-star medical command to oversee military health care, a significant break from the tradition of each service operating its own health care system.

- Keeping current commissary benefits, such as continuing to sell products at cost plus a 5 percent surcharge. A separate Department of Defense budget proposal is expected to call for increasing prices to cover operating costs.

- Consolidating the commissary and exchange systems. Initially,

they would keep their separate branding — Navy Exchange, Defense Commissary Agency, etc. — but eventually would be combined.

- Building more child development centers on military bases.

The proposal also calls for automatically enrolling each servicemember in the Thrift Savings Plan, an investment account that accrues savings. Individual troops would be responsible for managing their accounts, and the money is typically not available for withdrawal without penalty until age 59½.

The government contributions likely would be a percentage of

basic pay and could vary depending on years of service and/or deployment status. Full ownership of the thrift savings account would come only after troops have completed several years of service.

By allowing many troops to keep their TSP government contributions after separation, the new proposal would give limited retirement benefits to the vast majority who leave the military before hitting the traditional retirement milestone of 20 years of service — most of them enlisted members who do four, six or eight years and then leave.

It would be a sea change from a system that now offers retirement

benefits to about 17 percent of the force — many of them officers — who serve 20 years.

Any change to military retirement would require Congress to pass changes in law. Many experts say Congress is unlikely to summon the political will to take action on the controversial issue of military compensation.

Nevertheless, the report is likely to trigger a new battle in that arena.

Also unknown is whether the commission's proposals will get fast-tracked to an up-or-down vote or move through Congress' normal process.

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MILITARY

Bill would grant war powers to fight militants

By DEB RIECHMANN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The top Democrat on the House intelligence panel is introducing a bill Wednesday to authorize the war against Islamic State militants, saying Congress should not wait to see if the White House sends over its blueprint of what the legislation should say.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said he wants to spark the debate in the Republican-controlled Congress over a new authorization to fight the Islamic State group, which has been fighting for territory in Iraq and Syria.

"We're in what it seems is a

never-ending game of who goes first in terms of putting a draft out there — the White House or Congress?" Schiff said. "It's time we moved past this. ... I think the administration is reluctant to put something out there that's going to be shut down by House and Senate leadership."

In the U.S. battle against the Islamic State group, President Barack Obama has been relying on congressional authorizations that President George W. Bush used to justify military action after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Critics say the White House's use of post-9/11 congressional authorizations is a legal stretch, at best.

Obama has insisted that he had

'We're in what it seems is a never-ending game of who goes first in terms of putting a draft out there — the White House or Congress?'

Rep. Adam Schiff

D-Calif.

the legal authority to send several thousand U.S. troops to train and assist Iraqi security forces and to launch airstrikes against targets in Iraq and Syria since September. But he said in his State of the Union address that he wanted Congress to pass a new authorization.

Schiff's bill would authorize the use of force against the Islamic

State group in Iraq and Syria for three years, but it prohibits the use of ground forces in a combat mission in either of the two nations.

Those provisions conflict with what Secretary of State John Kerry said should be in any new authorization.

He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last month that

any new authorization should not limit U.S. military action to just Iraq and Syria or prevent the president from deploying ground troops if he later deems them necessary.

Kerry also said that if the new authorization had a time limit, there should be a provision for it to be renewed.

Schiff acknowledged that his bill is not completely aligned with what the White House envisions.

But he said that if the president later decided, for instance, to deploy ground troops, there is nothing that would preclude him from returning to Congress to ask for new authority to do that.

VA may be forced to release information

By HEATH DRUZIN

Stars and Stripes

Members of a House subcommittee lashed out at the Department of Veterans Affairs on Wednesday for withholding information they and budget researchers say is crucial to overseeing the VA's ailing health care system, and said they are considering legislation that will force the department to release data.

At a hearing to discuss the cost and quality of VA health care, an official with the Congressional Budget Office, which provides independent analysis for Congress, said the VA refused to provide his office with basic information about its health care for a report released in December comparing the VA medical system with the private sector.

"Additional data, particularly if it was provided on a regular and systematic basis, could help inform policymakers about the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of VHA's services," said Matthew Goldberg, the CBO deputy assistant director for national security.

The hearing of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health was held to discuss the cost and quality of VA care in comparison with that in the private sector, but much of it focused on the lack of data from the VA that Goldberg said made an already difficult comparison impossible.

The report was commissioned

in part to give lawmakers and VA officials a better idea of how to reform the VA in the wake of a national veterans' health care scandal.

Similar reports are done on Tricare, the Department of Defense's health care program, but Goldberg said the VA would not release similar patient and care information that the DOD provides, even with sensitive patient data redacted.

Goldberg's statement prompted some congressmen to question the VA's commitment to reform and to float the idea of legislation forcing the department to release certain data.

"Unfortunately, it became painfully apparent to me last year that the Veterans Health Administration, which operates the VA health care system, was either unable or unwilling to provide basic information about the services it provides," said Rep. Dan Benishek, R-Mich.

"VA's lack of transparency is echoed in the disappointing testimony — absent substance or detail — that VA provided for this morning's hearing."

Dr. James Tuchschildt, the VA's acting deputy undersecretary for health, said he would work with Congress on releasing additional data, though he did not specify what the VA would release.

"We have my commitment today to sit down with my staff and figure out what kind of data you need," he said.



OLIVIER DOULIERY, AP/WIDE WORLD

Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald has come under increasing criticism from lawmakers who say he's not doing enough to reform the agency.

The department has been under fire since revelations last summer that some VA medical centers had created secret patient waiting lists to make it appear veterans were getting care faster than they were. The scandal cost former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki his job. His replacement, Bob McDonald, who promised top-to-bottom reform at the department, has been getting increasing criticism from lawmakers.

"The new secretary is not changing the culture as far as I can see," Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., said at the hearing.

In response to Stars and Stripes' questions, VA spokeswoman Linda West said she would not say why the department withheld the data or whether it plans to release the information to Congress and the budget office in the future.

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Hike: GOP likely to support increase

FROM FRONT PAGE

The increases are likely to find support among defense hawks on Capitol Hill, but Republicans controlling Congress are only in the early stages of figuring out how to pay for them. Simply taking the money from domestic agencies is sure to be opposed by the White House and could lead to gridlock in Washington.

"The sequester is hurting our national security and undermining our defense," Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., told reporters Tuesday. But he warned against cutting domestic programs such as education and research to boost the Pentagon budget.

"You'll undermine investments in education, research, health and other matters critically important to individuals and our country's economy and shift that money to the defense side," he said.

House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price, R-Ga., said Republicans are considering cuts

to so-called mandatory programs to find money for the Pentagon, but a decision is still far away.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Wednesday morning, fielding questions about the Pentagon's plan versus the effects of budget pains the agency would otherwise face.

The Pentagon plan anticipates cutting 15,000 Army soldiers this year and cutting another 25,000 soldiers by 2018 for an Army "end strength" of 450,000. The Navy would get an uptick of 5,600 sailors this year.

Most of the proposed increase would go to procurement of new warfighting equipment and to operations and maintenance accounts. Procurement accounts would get a 15 percent boost, to \$108 billion.

The increases would allow for 57 new next-generation F-35 fighters, nine new ships and submarines and construction of new long-range Air Force tankers.

Senate hearings for Carter to start Feb. 4

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Tuesday announced it will consider Ashton Carter's nomination as the next defense secretary on Feb. 4.

Carter, a former deputy defense secretary and physicist, was picked by President Barack Obama last month to succeed outgoing Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel. His nomination hearing was delayed by the Senate Armed Services Committee after he re-

quested more time to recover from back surgery.

The military oversight committee, chaired by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., will question Carter and weigh whether to approve his nomination. He would be taking the helm of the Pentagon at a time of squeezed defense budgets and widespread global unrest, including a new war in Iraq and Syria.

Hagel's farewell ceremony was planned for Wednesday at the Pentagon but he is expected to stay on during the transition.

From staff reports



Dana Nolan was a promising young TV reporter until a serial killer tried to add her to his victims. Struggling with post-traumatic stress syndrome, plagued by flashbacks and fearsome nightmares, Dana returns to her hometown and instead of peace finds anything but the comfort she expects.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Jordan OKs swap of inmate for pilot held by militants

By KARIN LAUB
AND ELAINE KURTENBACH
The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — Jordan is willing to swap an Iraqi female prisoner involved in deadly 2005 hotel bombings for a Jordanian pilot captured in December by extremists from the Islamic State group, a government spokesman said Wednesday.

Such a swap would run counter to Jordan's headline approach toward Islamic militants and to the position of its main ally, the United States, of not negotiating with extremists. An exchange also would set a precedent for negotiating with Islamic State group militants, who in the past have not publicly demanded prisoner releases.

However, Jordan's government faces domestic pressure to bring the pilot home, while its participation in a U.S.-led military coalition against the Islamic State group is widely unpopular among Jordanians.

The government spokesman, Mohammed al-Momani, did not say whether a swap would actually take place. He also made no mention of Japanese journalist Kenji Goto, who is also being held by the Islamic State group.

Efforts to release the pilot and the journalist gained urgency with the release late Tuesday of

a purported online ultimatum claiming the Islamic State group would kill both hostages within 24 hours if the Iraqi woman was not freed.

On Wednesday, al-Momani said that "Jordan is ready to release the Iraqi prisoner, Sajida al-Rishawi, if the Jordanian pilot, Lt. Mu'ath al-Kaseasbeh, is released unharmed." His comments were carried by Jordan's official Petra news agency.

Al-Rishawi was sentenced to death in Jordan for her involvement in a 2005 al-Qaida attack on hotels in Amman that killed 60 people. Her release would be a major propaganda coup for the Islamic State group.

Jordan is reportedly in indirect talks with the militants through religious and tribal leaders in Iraq to secure the hostages' release. The chairman of the foreign affairs committee of Jordan's parliament, Bassam al-Manasseer, has been quoted as saying that Jordan and Japan would not negotiate directly with the Islamic State group and would not free al-Rishawi for the Japanese hostage only.

The pilot's father, Safi al-Kaseasbeh, has repeatedly criticized the Jordanian government's handling of the crisis, saying more must be done to bring his son home.

"I contacted the Turkish au-

thorities after I found that the Jordanian government is not serious in the negotiations," he told The Associated Press, speaking after the government raised the possibility of a swap.

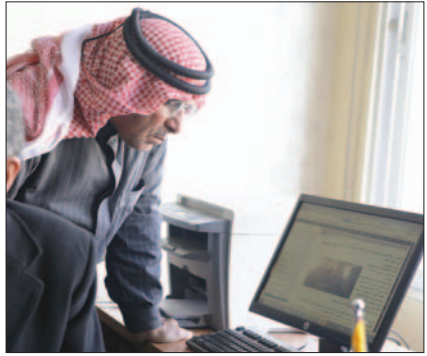
"The government needs to work seriously, the way one would do to free a son, like the Japanese government does," the father said.

On Tuesday evening, about 200 of the pilot's relatives protested outside the prime minister's office in Amman, chanting anti-government slogans and urging that it meet the captors' demands.

In Tokyo, the mother of the Japanese hostage appealed publicly to Japan's premier to save her son. Junko Ishido read to reporters her plea to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which she said she sent after both Abe and Japan's main government spokesman declined to meet with her.

"Please save Kenji's life," Ishido said, begging Abe to work with the Jordanian government until the very end to try to save Goto.

"Kenji has only a little time left," she said. The AP could not independently verify videos released Saturday and Tuesday. They lack the logo of the Islamic State group's al-Furqan media arm. But some militant websites affiliated with the Islamic State group referenced the latest video and posted links to it on Tuesday.



RAAD ADAYLEN/AP

Safi al-Kaseasbeh, father of captured Jordanian pilot Lt. Mu'ath al-Kaseasbeh, looks at a website where Islamic State militants posted a video threatening to kill the pilot and a Japanese hostage.

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Group loyal to Islamic State claims Libyan hotel attack

By ESAM MOHAMED
The Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Libya — A Libyan affiliate of the extremist Islamic State group claimed responsibility Wednesday for an attack on a Tripoli luxury hotel that killed 10 people, including an American and four Europeans.

The group, calling itself "Islamic State" in the "Libyan Province," said it launched the attack Tuesday to avenge the death of Abu Anas al-Libi, who was snatched off a Tripoli street by U.S. Special Forces in 2013 and died in U.S. custody earlier this month due to complications from liver surgery. Al-Libi had been indicted in U.S. federal court over his alleged role in the 1998 al-Qaida bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

The group identified the attackers as Abu Ibrahim al-Tunisi and Abu Suleiman al-Sudani, noms de guerre that suggest the attackers were Tunisian and Sudanese. The claim of responsibility was dated Tuesday but first appeared on jihadi forums Wednesday.

"The operation is not the last one on the lands of Tripoli ... Let

the enemies of God, the crusaders and their allies await what would harm them," the message read.

In addition to the foreigners, five guards were killed in the attack Tuesday on the seaside Corinthia Hotel. Two attackers were killed following an hours-long standoff that included a car bombing.

A senior U.S. State Department official confirmed that an American citizen was among those killed. Cliff Taylor, the CEO of a Virginia security company, Crucible LLC, identified the slain American as David Berry, a contractor with his company.

The affiliate previously claimed responsibility for an attack on the Algerian Embassy that wounded three guards. It also previously posted pictures of fighters touring markets and distributing pamphlets. Wednesday's posting matched previous messages posted on Twitter and other social media, but it was not immediately possible to confirm the claim.

Since the 2011 uprising that ousted longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi, the country has been swash in armed militias, including several Islamic extremist groups. A group of Islamist militias controls Tripoli.

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NATION



AP Photos

Jill Leach digs out her car in Boston's Charlestown section on Wednesday, one day after a blizzard dumped about 2 feet of snow in the city.

New England faces snowy 'big dig'

The Associated Press

BOSTON — New Englanders savaged by a blizzard packing knee-high snowfall and hurricane-force winds began digging out Wednesday, grudgingly praising forecasters who got grief from New Yorkers and others spared its full fury.

The storm buried the Boston area in more than 2 feet of snow and lashed it with howling winds that exceeded 70 mph. It punched a gaping hole in a seavall and swamped a vacant home in Marshfield, Mass., and flipped a 110-foot replica of a Revolutionary War ship in Newport, R.I., snapping its mast and puncturing its hull.

Boston is accustomed to big snowstorms, and with ample warning that a blizzard was coming, officials mobilized thousands of snowplows and called up the National Guard to ensure a speedy recovery.

"We've come out of this in relatively good shape," Gov. Charlie Baker acknowledged Wednesday.

Capturing the city's resilient spirit, an unidentified man was hailed as a folk hero after he was photographed clearing snow from the finish line of the Boston Marathon, where twin bombs killed three people and wounded 260 in 2013.

Morning commuters high-stepped their way through a warren of snowy paths and towering snowbanks that gave much of Massachusetts an almost alpine feel.

"I had to jump out the window because the door only opens one way," Chuck Beliveau said in the hard-hit central town of Westborough. "I felt like a kid again. When I was a kid, we'd burrow through snow drifts like moles."

But signs of normalcy emerged: Boston's public transit was running and Amtrak trains to New York and Washington were rolling on a limited schedule. Flights began arriving at Logan Interna-



Peadair Flood's home in Scituate, Mass., is coated in frozen sea spray.

tional Airport, among the nation's busiest air hubs, just after 8 a.m. Although the Washington-Baltimore area was dealt only a glancing blow, dozens of flights were canceled and delayed Wednesday at the three major airports.

In Massachusetts, bitter cold threatened to complicate efforts to clear clogged streets and restore power to more than 15,000 customers shivering in the dark, including the entire island of Nantucket.

The low in Boston on Wednesday was expected to be 10 degrees, with a wind chill of minus 5. Forecasters warned that it won't get above freezing for a week, and more snow — though nothing major — was expected later in the week.

Around New England, snowplows struggled to keep up, and Boston police drove several dozen doctors and nurses to work at hospitals. Snow blanketed Boston Common, where the Redcoats drilled during the Revolution, and drifts piled up against Faneuil Hall, where Samuel Adams agitated for rebellion against the British.

More than 24 inches of snow

coated Boston's airport, the sixth-highest in recorded history. The record is 27.6 inches in 2003. Worcester got 33.5 inches — the highest amount recorded since 1905 — and Auburn and Lunenburg each reported 36 inches.

Two deaths, both on Long Island, were tied to the storm by police: a 17-year-old who crashed into a light pole while snow-tubing down a street and an 83-year-old man with dementia who was found dead in his backyard.

The Philadelphia-to-Boston corridor of more than 35 million people had braced for a paralyzing blast Monday evening and into Tuesday after forecasters warned of a storm of potentially historic proportions.

The glancing blow left forecasters apologizing and politicians defending their near-total shutdown on travel.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio defended his administration's decision to prepare for the storm by closing roads amid forecasts of more than 2 feet of snow.

"You can't put a price on safety," he said Wednesday on NBC's "Today" show.

Actual snowfall vs. forecasted amounts

CONNECTICUT

Thompson: Actual 33.5 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
Lisbon: Actual 26 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.

MAINE

Lewiston: Actual 27 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
South Windham: Actual 18 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
Portland: Actual 25 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.

MASSACHUSETTS

Lunenburg: Actual 36 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
Auburn: Actual 36 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
Frammingham: Actual 33.5 inches; forecast more than 2 feet.
Boston: Actual 24.4 inches; forecast more than 2 feet.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Windham: Actual 22.1 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
Lindenhurst in Nassau County: Actual 32 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.

NEW JERSEY

Brick: Actual 10 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
Harrison: Actual 7.5 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.

NEW YORK

Orient in Suffolk County: Actual 30 inches; forecast 20-30 inches.
Lindenhurst in Nassau County: Actual 21.6 inches; forecast 18-24 inches.
LaGuardia Airport: Actual 11.4 inches; forecast 20-30 inches.
Central Park: Actual 9.8 inches; forecast 20-30 inches.

PENNSYLVANIA

Washington Crossing: Actual 5 inches; forecast 12-16 inches.
Philadelphia: Actual 1.2 inches; forecast 12-16 inches.

RHODE ISLAND

West Glocester: Actual 24.4 inches; forecast more than 2 feet.
North Providence: Actual 17 inches; forecast more than 2 feet.

SOURCE: National Weather Service

Convictions erased for civil rights protesters

The Associated Press

ROCK HILLS, S.C. — The convictions of nine South Carolina black men who integrated a whites-only lunch counter during the height of the American civil rights movement were tossed out Wednesday during an emotional hearing before a packed courtroom.

"We cannot rewrite history, but we can right history," Judge Mark Hayes said as he made the ruling for the men known as the Friendship 9, and those in court clapped and cheered.

Prosecutor Kevin Brackett apologized to the men — eight of whom were in court. The ninth has died. "Sometimes you just have to say you're sorry," Brackett said. "My heartfelt apologies for what happened in 1961."

Fifty-four years ago, the eight college students and one civil rights organizer were convicted of trespassing and protesting at McCrory variety store in Rock Hill.

The men's refusal to pay bail money into the segregationist town's city coffers served as a catalyst for other civil disobedience.

Utah family found dead feared the apocalypse

The Associated Press

SPRINGVILLE, Utah — Benjamin and Kristi Strack often talked about the apocalypse and wanting to leave the evil they saw in the world, but friends and family thought that meant they would one day move somewhere remote and live off the grid.

Instead, they oversaw a son on a lethal combination of methadone, cold medicine and other drugs along with their three children, ages 11, 12 and 14, according to police.

There were troubling signs before the five bodies were found in a family bedroom on the name of the village home in September. The couple had struggled with drugs, as well as legal and financial problems. They also had been close friends with a Utah prison inmate serving a life sentence for killing a family member. A news report of the God, slayings chronicled in the 2003 Jon Krakauer book "Under the Banner of Heaven."

Investigators determined the parents committed suicide, Springville Police Chief J. Scott Finlayson said at a news conference called Tuesday at the conclusion of the investigation. The younger two children's deaths were ruled homicides, although Finlayson said there were no signs of a struggle.

The manner of death for the 14-year-old, Benson Strack, was undetermined.

WORLD

US ready to press Russia further

By DARYNA KRASNOLUTSKA
Bloomberg News

Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew said the U.S. is "prepared to do more" to press Russia after battles between Ukrainian troops and separatists intensified to the deadliest in almost five months.

Speaking in Kiev on Wednesday, Lew reiterated plans for as much as \$2 billion in U.S. loan guarantees to cash-strapped Ukraine, in addition to \$1 billion granted last year.

Three Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 15 wounded in overnight fighting in the nation's easternmost regions, the military said.

"Our first choice is a diplomatic resolution that allows us to lessen sanctions, but we remain prepared to do more if necessary," Lew told reporters after meeting Ukrainian Finance Minister Natalie Jaresko. "We will continue to work with our allies to increase the pressure on Russia."

Clashes this month have escalated to the worst since a September cease-fire increasing tensions between Russia and its former Cold War foes. The European Union and the U.S. are considering additional sanctions against Russia in technology, energy, defense and banking over its backing for the rebels. Russia denies involvement in the conflict in Ukraine.

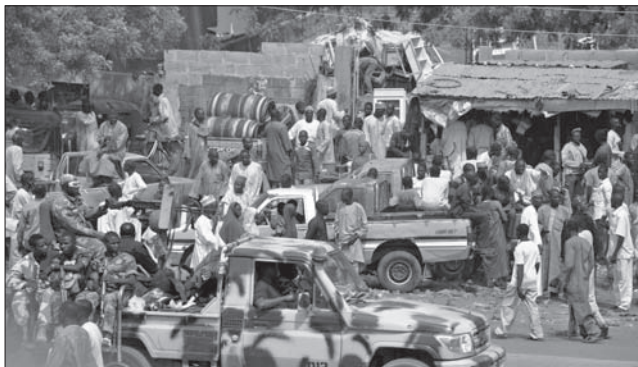
The EU has said "further restrictive measures" against Russia will be discussed at a foreign ministers meeting Thursday in Brussels.

Lew said the U.S. is committed to a \$1 billion loan guarantee in the first half of the year to help finance social spending, with an additional \$1 billion contingent on Ukraine revamping its economy.

"We also expect Ukraine to make further gains in its efforts to root out corruption, to reform the energy sector, fix the financial system, improve the business climate and repair the country's finances," Lew said.

Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, is trying to avoid default amid a conflict the United Nations estimates has claimed more than 5,000 lives. To stay afloat, the government needs \$15 billion on top of a \$17 billion International Monetary Fund bailout, according to the EU.

The recent surge in violence has included civilian deaths in Donetsk and the port city of Mariupol. Each side blames the other for the fatalities.



PHOTOS BY JOSSY OLA/AP

Nigerian soldiers, foreground, pass on the back of an armed truck as they patrol at a local market Tuesday after recent violence in surrounding areas at Maiduguri, Nigeria.

Report: Nigerian army forewarned about Boko Haram raids that killed hundreds

By YINKA IBUKUN
Bloomberg News

LAGOS, Nigeria — Nigeria's military failed to protect civilians despite being warned of impending Islamist attacks on two north-eastern towns where hundreds died this month, Amnesty International said Wednesday.

Boko Haram militants warned residents of Baga "almost two months ago" that they would come there to attack troops and local militias before their Jan. 3 raid on the town, the London-based group said in a statement, citing an unidentified military official. Boko Haram told locals the next target would be Monguno and the military was informed, Amnesty said. Boko Haram captured Monguno, 35 miles south of Baga, on Sunday, according to militia member Hassan Ibrahim.

"It is clear from this evidence that Nigeria's military leadership woefully and repeatedly failed in their duty to protect civilians of Baga and Monguno despite repeated warnings about an impending threat posed by Boko Haram," Netsanet Belay, Amnesty's Africa director, said in the statement. "These attacks are an urgent wake-up call for the Nigerian leadership, the African Union and the international community."

Boko Haram has escalated its violent campaign to impose Shariah, or Islamic rule, in Africa's biggest oil-producing nation, killing more than 4,700 people last year, double the number in 2013, risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft estimates. As it attacked Monguno on Sunday, it also made a failed attempt to take Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state.

About 5,000 people fled Monguno to seek refuge in Maiduguri, Abdulkadir Ibrahim, a spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency, said Monday.

Varying casualty figures have emerged since those attacks. Amnesty said the raids on Baga and Monguno alone "claimed hundreds of lives." The military has said initial evidence shows no



Villagers sit on the back of a small truck as they and others flee the recent violence near Maiduguri.

more than 150 people were killed in the violence around Baga.

Calls to the mobile phones of army spokesman Chris Okolade and government spokesman Mike Omeri didn't connect, and they didn't immediately reply to text messages requesting comment.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, with more than 170 million people, will hold elections next month in the face of increasing violence by Boko Haram. The insurgents control an area the size of Belgium in the northeast, British Foreign Office Minister of State Hugo Swire said this month.

At least 30 people were killed in Boko Haram assaults on the two northeastern towns of Madagali

and Michika in the state of Adamawa on Monday, according to Adamu Kamale, a member of the region's legislature representing the area.

The African Union last week backed plans by a number of African states to form a joint force to fight Boko Haram as the group has expanded attacks to Nigeria's neighbors. Chad has deployed troops to assist in fighting the insurgents in northern Cameroon.

Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama said on Jan. 16 that his country was willing to provide soldiers for a regional force and that he had received similar commitments from the leaders of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Death of Russian fugitive probed

By JILL LAWLESS
The Associated Press

LONDON — The body of former Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko was so radioactive that his postmortem was "one of the most dangerous" ever undertaken, a pathologist said Wednesday.

Nathaniel Cary said Litvinenko's body was so hazardous that it was left in place for two days after he died at a London hospital on Nov. 23, 2006, from poisoning with radioactive polonium-210.

"It has been described as one of the most dangerous post-mortem examinations ever undertaken in the Western world," Cary said on the second day of the inquiry into Litvinenko's death. "I think that's about right."

Litvinenko, a former KGB agent turned Kremlin critic, fell violently ill on Nov. 1, 2006, after drinking tea with two Russian men at a London hotel.

Police Detective Inspector Craig Mascall told the inquiry Wednesday that the men who met Litvinenko — Dmitry Kovtun and Andrei Lugovoi — are still wanted for murder.

They have denied involvement, and Russia has refused to extradite them.

In Moscow, Lugovoi told The Associated Press that evidence being presented at the inquiry is "nonsense." "Such evidence simply does not exist because Russia wasn't involved," Lugovoi said at his office at Russia's parliament. "Second, even if somebody had produced it, then I can only say that it's a fake and speculation."

Lugovoi also said the inquiry is designed to cover up what he suggested was the possible involvement of the British intelligence agency MI6. "In my opinion, any documents that the British secret services will obtain in this case are fake because their sole purpose is to whitewash the British secret services in this story."



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WORLD

'A toxic mistake'

Greece's new liberal government rejects 'unrealistic' eurozone budget agreement

By NICHOLAS PAPHITIS
AND DEREK GATOPOULOS
The Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — Greece's radical new government on Wednesday signaled the country would backtrack or scrap a series of budget measures its eurozone creditor nations had demanded in exchange for bailout loans.

The move fueled market concerns of a tough confrontation with eurozone countries, whose loans are keeping Greece from bankruptcy. Stock and bond markets in Europe plummeted.

Left wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras described the country's bailout budget commitments as "crushing and unobtainable," while his finance minister called the bailout agreements a "toxic mistake."

Previous governments in Athens had committed to achieving high primary budget surpluses — that is, surpluses that do not count the cost of servicing debt — in order to make the country's national borrowings more sustainable.



Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, second right, and Deputy Prime Minister Giannis Dragasakis, second left, chat during the first Cabinet meeting of the new government at the parliament in Athens on Wednesday.

But Tsipras's Syriza Party, which won a sweeping general election victory Sunday on a promise it would overhaul those earlier commitments, calls that target unrealistic. He said his government would instead seek to balance the primary budget.

Instead of using the money to pay down debt, the money would be used to help the economy, he said. "This is a government of societal salvation and it has a very difficult task," Tsipras told his first Cabinet meeting. "We want to negotiate the reduction of the debt and an end to conditions of choking austerity."

In Brussels, Jyrki Katainen, the vice president of the European Union's executive Commission,

said Greek authorities are expected "to fulfill everything that they have promised to fulfill."

'This is a government of societal salvation, and it has a very difficult task.'

Alexis Tsipras
prime minister of
Greece

The new Greek government, Tsipras said, was seeking "real-

istic proposals" on how to make Greece's huge rescue loans easier to manage and ways of dealing with the "humanitarian crisis" of mass unemployment and rising poverty.

New Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis called the bailout agreement a "toxic mistake."

"Today we are turning the page on that mistake that cost human lives, that were lost or undermined," he said.

He argued that the main problem was not that Greece received rescue loans but that the required reforms focused on reducing debt rather than investing in growth. As a result, the money was thrown "into a black hole."

US diplomat summoned to Thailand over remarks

The Associated Press

BANGKOK — Thailand's military government summoned the U.S. charge d'affaires for talks on Wednesday after a top U.S. diplomat roiled the junta during a visit by calling for an end to martial law and saying the impeachment of a former prime minister could be politically motivated.

Daniel Russel, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, made the comments during a university speech in Bangkok on Monday.

On Wednesday, coup leader-turned-Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said he was "saddened" by the remarks and said "the U.S. does not understand the way we work."

Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, who met with U.S. Charge d'Affairs W. Patrick Murphy, said Russel's comments had "hurt" many Thais and showed a lack of understanding of Thai politics.

Don said Murphy was summoned not to protest but to explain the government's point of view. A spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy confirmed the two had met, but did not comment further.

Thailand, a long-standing U.S. ally, has been under martial law since the military staged a coup last May. Last week, the country's military-appointed legislature voted to ban ousted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra from politics for five years for overseeing a rice subsidy program that lost billions of dollars. Yingluck is also facing criminal charges that carry a 10-year prison term.

In a speech to students at Chulalongkorn University on Monday, Russel — America's highest-level diplomat to visit Thailand since the coup — said the perception of fairness is important to justice.

"I'll be blunt here: When an elected leader is deposed, impeached by the authorities that implemented the coup, and then targeted with criminal charges while basic democratic processes and institutions are interrupted, the international community is left with the impression that these steps could be politically driven," Russel said.

Russel also expressed concern over "significant restraints on freedom of expression in Thailand today, and said the country's political process does not represent 'all elements of Thai society.'"

Hostilities at Israel-Lebanon border escalate

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The Lebanese Hezbollah group claimed responsibility for firing a missile that targeted an Israeli military convoy on Wednesday, an attack that prompted Israel to fire at least 50 artillery shells into Lebanon in a significant escalation along the volatile border.

In a statement, Hezbollah said its fighters destroyed a number of Israeli vehicles that were carrying Israeli officers and soldiers and caused casualties among "enemy ranks." It said the attack was carried out by a group calling itself the "heroic martyrs of Quneitra" — suggesting it was in retaliation for an Israeli airstrike on the Golan Heights on Jan. 18 that killed six Hezbollah fighters and an Iranian general.



LUFTALLAH DANEH/AP

Smoke rises from Israeli shelling on the outskirts of the Lebanese village of Abbasieh, at the Lebanese-Israeli border, south Lebanon, on Wednesday.

The Israeli military said an anti-tank missile hit an Israeli military vehicle near the Israeli-Lebanese border on Wednesday.

It did not immediately report any casualties and said residents of the area have been ordered to remain in their homes.

Wednesday's attack took place near Mount Dov and Shebaa Farms, a disputed tract of land where the borders of Israel, Lebanon and Syria meet.

Two Lebanese officials said the Israeli shelling targeted the border villages of Majidiyeh, Abbasieh and Kfar Chouba near the Shebaa Farms area. They spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

On the Lebanese side, there were also no immediate reports of casualties. Families living on the border of the villages fled further within, fearing they'd be hit, said the officials, who were based in south Lebanon.

One of the Lebanese officials said the incident is believed to be a "sophisticated Hezbollah operation" targeting Israeli vehicles along the border.

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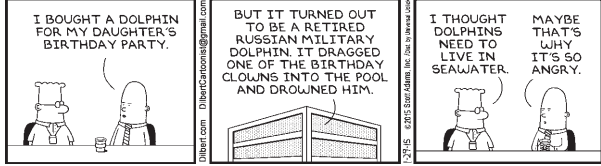
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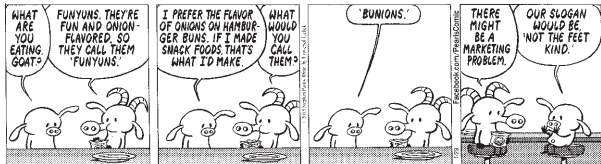
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18								19	20			
	21				22	23						
24	25	26			27			28		29	30	
31					32					33		
34					35			36		37		
					38			39		40		
41	42							43		44	45	46
47					48	49	50					
51					52					53		
54					55					56		

ACROSS

- Unembellished
- Movie producer
- Whedon
- Gear tooth
- Holly
- Vicinity
- Lawyers' org.
- Bishop's bailiwick
- Aviv
- Last
- Antiknock alcohol
- Man's address
- Star's bit part
- Spiked club
- Once around
- Sad to tell...
- Carte intro
- Part of TGIF
- Bachelor's last words
- Compassion
- Yon maiden
- Garbage barge
- Gleeful
- Dorothy's auntie
- Hear the rooster
- Psychological injury
- Scepter
- Purgative
- Anger
- Shrek is one
- Mountain lake
- Commercials
- Sauce source

- Old woman's home?
- Church section
- Chart
- Frazier foe
- Battery terminals
- Speech problem
- Kerfuffle
- Scatter seeds
- Tibetan beast
- Intelligence
- Rio Grande feeder
- Geologic time
- Met melody
- Sen-tence component
- Team
- Hexagonal state
- Spanish muralist
- Joan
- Dermatologist's case
- Guiseville's heroine
- Have a go at

DOWN

- Cinderella's hors-es
- Verve
- On a pension (Abbr.)
- Dig up
- Green gem
- Bobby of hockey
- Vast expanse
- "The Crucible"
- Setting-rang
- Do as you're told
- Chutzpah
- Blunder
- Afternoon social
- Cartoonist
- Guiseville's heroine

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	O	N	E	J	A	W	S	H	E
A	P	E	X	E	R	A	P	E	R
F	E	A	T	H	E	R	S	R	A
E	N	T	R	A	P	P	O	U	T
				A	L	E	S	U	C
E	B	B	T	R	Y	T	E	E	N
V	E	R	A	S	E	C	D	R	O
A	T	O	N	E	W	O	N	S	T
				T	O	L	D	T	E
A	W	H	I	L	E	T	W	I	N
C	H	E	N	S	M	O	T	H	E
T	O	R	T	K	I	N	I	R	I
S	A	S	S	S	O	S	L	O	N

1-29

CRYPTOQUIP

FWHD Y FXZ QHXP LC LHXBW

GP ZGXEE IYK WCF LC LYH

WHQ ZWCHZ, Y BQYHK "WHQH

JCHZ IDCLLYDJ!"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I REALLY MUST OWN THIS FANCY ITEM BEING AUCTIONED OFF. I WILL HANG ON UNTIL THE BIDDER END!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals T

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Sales of iPhones crush predictions

By HAYLEY TSUKAYAMA
The Washington Post

If there was any doubt that Apple Inc. fans would like the new iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus, it's been definitively put to rest.

Apple on Tuesday reported that it sold 74.5 million iPhones in its holiday quarter. That blew past analyst expectations of 69 million and helped drive the company to record a profit of \$18 billion.

But another way the revenue from just the iPhone for the quarter is more than the quarterly revenue that Microsoft and Google reported on their most recent earnings statements combined.

Apple is not only growing fast, it's also growing in all the right places. The company reported that revenue in China — the region with the most immediate potential for smartphone growth — was up 70 percent from the same period a year ago, to \$16.1 billion. Apple has four stores in China and is looking track to have around 40 locations there by the middle of next year.

\$18B

The record profit reported by Apple Inc. for the holiday quarter. The company's revenue from just the iPhone for the quarter is more than the quarterly revenue that Microsoft Corp. and Google Inc. reported on their most recent earnings statements combined.

The quarter was a spectacular showing for chief executive Tim Cook, whose bet on the super-size smartphones was a departure from the smaller screens preferred by the company's iconic co-founder, Steve Jobs. Apple's stock jumped more than 5 percent in after-hours trading to as much as \$115 per share after the company's report.

The sales figures are all the more impressive because they come at a time when the world-wide market for expensive smartphones is dropping. According to research from the Consumer Electronics Association, the average selling price of a smartphone has fallen from \$440 to an expected \$275 in just five years.

The full price of the cheapest iPhone is \$649. In fact, the average price of an iPhone went up, thanks to the popularity of the iPhone 6 Plus, which starts at \$749. That's right — Apple's actually getting people to pay more for phones. (Of course, most are purchased at subsidized prices through wireless carriers.)

The company is also beginning to appeal to new smartphone customers and managing to poach some converts from its rival, Google.

"We saw more new customers to iPhone than we'd ever seen before," Cook said in a conference call with reporters and analysts. "And we saw a higher rate of An-

droid switchers than in the three previous launches."

The tech giant also reported record sales for its iTunes and App stores and an increase in Mac sales. But Apple couldn't buck the industry trend toward slower sales for tablets. Sales of its iPad unit dropped 18 percent from the same period last year.

Cook said during the earnings call that Apple will begin to ship its next major product, the Apple Watch, in April.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 29)	\$1.1555
Dollar buys (Jan. 29)	€0.8580
British pound (Jan. 29)	\$1.56
Japanese yen (Jan. 29)	¥115.00
South Korean won (Jan. 29)	₩1,056.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.5178
Canada (dollar)	1.2448
China (Yuan)	6.2489
Denmark (Krone)	6.8822
Egypt (Pound)	7.4702
Euro	\$1.1309/0.8842
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7523
Hungary (Forint)	275.61
Israel (Shekel)	3.9447
Japan (Yen)	117.88
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2952
Norway (Krone)	7.7881
Philippines (Peso)	44.15
Poland (Zloty)	3.75
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7596
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3533
South Korea (Won)	1,086.24
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9046
Taiwan (Dollar)	32.55
Turkey (Lira)	2.3700

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which keep their local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
3-month bill	3.00
Federal funds market rate	0.12
3-month bill	0.01
30-year bond	2.40

MARKET WATCH

Jan. 27, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	-291.49
	17,387.21
Nasdaq composite	-90.26
	4,681.50
Standard & Poor's 500	-27.54
	2,029.55
Russell 2000	-6.08
	1,194.66

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Thursday's US temperatures The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	
Ablene, Texas	61	47	Pdly	Chatanooga	54	32	Cldy	Fort Wayne	38	26	Snow	Cldy	Portland	48	36	Cldy
Akron, Ohio	36	21	Snow	Chicago	43	25	Pdly	Fresno	57	42	Cldy	Louisville	59	39	Pdly	
Albany, N.Y.	52	31	Cldy	Cincinnati	39	31	Cldy	Goodland	47	30	Pdly	South Bend, Ind.	53	42	Cldy	
Albuquerque	51	34	Cir	Cleveland	37	23	Snow	Grand Rapids	49	28	Cldy	Madison	35	20	Cldy	
Allentown, Pa.	32	8	Cldy	Colorado Springs	44	29	Cldy	Green Bay	32	26	Snow	Medford	53	36	Cir	
Anchorage	42	35	Cldy	Columbia, S.C.	46	26	Pdly	Greensboro, N.C.	49	24	Pdly	Memphis	59	39	Cldy	
Asheville	49	25	Cldy	Columbus, Ga.	40	26	Cir	Green Bay	34	27	Cldy	Miami Beach	72	58	Pdly	
Atlanta	56	35	Pdly	Concord, N.H.	27	3	Pdly	Hartford	39	24	Pdly	Midland-Odessa	57	41	Cir	
Atlantic City	40	14	Cldy	Corpus Christi	74	56	Pdly	Hartford Spgld.	40	4	Pdly	Minneapolis	54	34	Cldy	
Austin	64	43	Cldy	Dallas-Ft. Worth	63	53	Pdly	Honolulu	75	65	Pdly	Mpls-St. Paul	29	27	Pdly	
Baltimore	36	18	Snow	Dayton	42	28	Cldy	Houston	73	52	Pdly	Monterey	65	36	Cir	
Baton Rouge	72	47	Pdly	Denver	66	42	Pdly	Huntsville	56	37	Cldy	New York	57	37	Cldy	
Bilings	47	29	Pdly	Des Moines	46	28	Cldy	Indianapolis	41	31	Cldy	New Orleans	71	49	Pdly	
Birmingham	60	37	Cldy	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Jackson, Miss.	73	45	Pdly	New York City	33	15	Cldy	
Bismarck	35	25	Pdly	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Jacksonville	66	34	Cldy	Omaha	38	25	Cldy	
Boise	44	32	Cldy	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Janeau	39	33	Pdly	Orlando	71	48	Pdly	
Boston	30	9	Cir	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Kansas City	44	39	Pdly	Portland, Me.	42	27	Cldy	
Bridgeport	30	9	Cir	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Knoxville	50	28	Cldy	North Platte	44	25	Cldy	
Brownsville	77	61	Pdly	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Lake Charles	73	52	Pdly	North Platte	44	25	Cldy	
Buffalo	36	10	Snow	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Lansing	35	25	Pdly	Omaha	38	25	Cldy	
Burlington, Vt.	30	10	Snow	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Las Vegas	66	49	Cldy	Omaha	38	25	Cldy	
Caribou, Maine	21	-7	Cir	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Lexington	46	31	Rain	Orlando	71	48	Pdly	
Casper, Wyo.	41	20	Cir	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Lincoln	40	33	Pdly	Philadelphia	37	15	Cldy	
Charleston, S.C.	58	29	Cir	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Little Rock	63	46	Cldy	Phoenix	73	56	Cldy	
Charleston, W.Va.	47	27	Rain	El Paso	61	43	Cldy	Los Angeles	76	54	Cldy	Phoenix	73	56	Cldy	
Charlotte, N.C.	51	28	Cldy	El Paso	61	43	Cldy					Philadelphia	37	15	Cldy	

National temperature extremes

Hi: Tue., 84°; Low: Mon., 14°

National temperature extremes
Hi: Tue., 84, Kingsville, Texas
Lo: Tue., -7, Mount Washington, N.H.

WORLD

Intercepting 'ghost ships' a race against time

Human smugglers turn to cargo vessels set on autopilot to ferry fleeing migrants

The Associated Press

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD CUTTER TYR — The crew was about to dig into dinner when word of the "ghost ship" came through: a freighter hurtling out of control toward Italy with no crew — and hundreds of Syrians as cargo.

The cattle freighter — its animal pens crammed with families — was on a collision course with the Italian coast, and the refugee who had phoned authorities from on board said the cabin's controls were jammed. The Tyr changed course and set off on a race against time.

The rescue operation by the Icelandic cutter Tyr was one of the most perilous in a string of high-seas dramas that point to a new modus operandi among smugglers who send migrants across the Mediterranean. Gangs buy scrapyard-bound cargo ships over the Internet and pack them with Syrians willing to pay top dollar to flee their ravaged homeland. The ships are then pointed toward Europe and abandoned, the migrants' fate hanging between shipwreck and rescue.

Until recently, most migrants paid several hundred dollars for a trip aboard an old fishing boat, dinghy or speedboat. Hundreds of men, women and children perish every year on these voyages when their unseaworthy vessels capsize in stormy seas.

The war in Syria, which has driven more than 3 million people into flight, has offered a new, lucrative opportunity for smugglers. Comparatively well-off refugees are able to pay higher prices for passage on bigger, safer ships from the far eastern Mediterranean directly to Italy, from where they then cross overland to central and northern European countries.

Many of those Syrians are willing to pay \$4,000-\$8,000 for a place on board a seaworthy cargo ship. For the gangs, that means that even if they lose a cargo ship that cost them a half-million dollars they can still earn millions of dollars in profit in a single trip.

The European Union border agency Frontex says about 15 cargo ships smuggling asylum-seekers have tried to reach Europe since August. Frontex spokeswoman Izabella Cooper said one vessel that arrived in Italy recently appeared to have been bought one from a scrapyard.

The cargo ship method is not likely to go away anytime soon because of high demand. In Turkey alone, more than 1 million Syrians are fending for themselves without jobs or basic services — many of them doctors or lawyers who can afford to pay thousands of dollars for a cargo ship berth, said Metin Corabattir, who heads the Ankara-

based Research Center on Asylum and Migration.

"We shall be seeing a lot more of these ships," Corabattir said. "These people have no future and often the only option they have is to leave. They will give everything that they have and risk their lives."

One of the smugglers' latest innovations is to select refugees with seafaring experience and put them in charge of the ship — offering them a steep discount in exchange for navigating. That means that the traffickers can remain safely ashore.

"There were no smugglers on board. There was no pilot on board. Even the crew, they weren't the crew," said Moutassem Yazbek, a Syrian who was rescued from a cargo ship by Frontex in December. "They were like me, refugees."

When a cattle freighter named the Ezadeen put out a distress call on New Year's Eve, it didn't even have a makeshift crew of migrants.

The Icelandic cutter Tyr was 20 miles away. But when it reached the stricken ship just after dark, Capt. Halldor Nellett knew there was no way to board the Sierra Leone-flagged freighter.

They contacted the ship by radio, and the woman who answered in English said she couldn't turn off the engines because the smugglers had wrecked the controls before leaving. The masked smugglers had locked the 359 migrants — including 42 women and 62 children — below deck in pens that looked like jail cells. They broke out once they realized the crew had abandoned them.

The Tyr shadowed the boat as it steamed closer to the Italian coast, powerless to stop it.

Then suddenly the Ezadeen's engines sputtered to a halt, and the ship went dark.

Robbed of momentum, the ship began listing in the high seas and the Icelanders sprang into action. Trained to rescue stricken fishing trawlers in the icy, storm-tossed waters of the north Atlantic, a four-man boarding team sped across the rough waters on the Tyr's launch to reach the freighter.

An Italian coast guard helicopter showed up, lowering several officers to try to restart the ship's engines, but it was no use — the fuel tanks were dry.

On board, hundreds of desperate migrants clutched suitcases and pleaded to be taken off the dark, lurching freighter that had been their prison for days.

The Icelanders promised to get everyone to Italy somehow. And they did. When morning came the weather cleared, and the ship was towed to Italy.

From there, they began a new adventure seeking family and friends in northern Europe.

‘We shall be seeing a lot more of these ships. These people have no future and often the only option they have is to leave. They will give everything that they have and risk their lives.’

Metin Corabattir
Research Center
on Asylum and Migration



Above: Sailors aboard the Icelandic Coast Guard cutter Tyr practice boarding a vessel on the high seas during a training exercise on Jan. 14.

Left: Capt. Halldor Nellett, aboard the Tyr, checks the radar on the bridge.

PHOTOS PAUL SCHEMME/AP

AMERICAN ROUNDUP



JESSE TINSLEY, THE (SPOKANE, WASH.) SPOKESMAN-REVIEW/AP

A personal taps tribute

Greg Jensen stands and salutes at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, Wash., as taps is played during military honors at a nearby chapel on Monday. Jensen, an Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, goes to the cemetery almost every day to visit the grave of his wife of 42 years, Estrella. In the chapel, a handful of veterans and a few family members read the names of veterans who died without a military funeral, said prayers and folded a flag, followed by a gun salute and taps.

Man pulls kids on sled with truck, is arrested

CT PLAINFIELD — A Plainfield man was arrested after police say he was pulling kids on a sled behind his speeding pickup truck.

Michael W. Chauvin faces charges of risk of injury to a minor, reckless endangerment and reckless driving. He was charged Monday night.

Police said Chauvin, 40, drove his Dodge Ram truck at "unreasonable speeds" on snow-covered roads, towing the children in the sled.

Police said other people, including children, were in the bed of the truck. One of the children was 9 years old.

Police did not say if Chauvin was related to any of the children.

More than a dozen boats burn at marina

CA SACRAMENTO — Fire officials are investigating a blaze that destroyed more than a dozen boats at a Sacramento County marina.

The flames were reported early Monday near the community of Walnut Grove in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

Officials said nobody was hurt in the fast-moving fire that gutted an estimated 14 boats, some of them houseboats as long as 65 feet. Propane tanks exploded and many of the covered slips collapsed under the intense heat.

The Sacramento Bee reported that many of the boat owners live out of town and learned of the fire when they saw televised images of flames devouring their boats or got phone calls from friends.

THE CENSUS

1,275

\$4,250. West Virginia State Police told media outlets that Lyle Russell Leshner Jr., 29, of Lansing, is accused of stealing the copper from the Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Mount Olive, W.Va., in 2013 and selling it with his father for more than \$4,250. West Virginia State Police and Public Safety spokesman Lawrence Messina said Leshner has been suspended pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

26 defendants indicted in \$16 million drug ring

MO KANSAS CITY — Federal prosecutors said 26 people have been indicted in an alleged \$16 million drug-trafficking operation between Mexico and Kansas City.

The U.S. Attorney's office said in a news release Monday that the defendants distributed more than 700 pounds of methamphetamine, 250 kilograms of cocaine and large amounts of heroin in the Kansas City area from June 2013 to June 2014. Several of the defendants also are charged with money laundering.

Prosecutors said drugs and money were transported in such things as computer towers, a microwave oven and a CD player.

Pet store owner wants dinosaur statue back

OK BARTLESVILLE — The owner of a north-eastern Oklahoma pet store is asking for the return of a nearly 9-foot-tall dinosaur statue.

KOTV-TV reported that the Tyrannosaurus statue has been outside Classic Pets in Bartlesville for almost a decade and is usually tied down with cables. Owner Kathy Keim said she discovered it was missing Sunday.

The number of pounds of copper rods and wires stolen from a prison roof and from behind a building at the prison complex, allegedly by a correctional officer who worked there. West Virginia State Police told media outlets that Lyle Russell Leshner Jr., 29, of Lansing, is accused of stealing the copper from the Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Mount Olive, W.Va., in 2013 and selling it with his father for more than \$4,250. West Virginia State Police and Public Safety spokesman Lawrence Messina said Leshner has been suspended pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

She said the dinosaur is popular in the community, especially among children. It's often dressed in outfits coordinated with specific events during the year. It wears a wedding gown in the spring; swimsuits and shorts in the summer; and a cap and gown to commemorate high school graduations.

Sinkhole swallows car after water main break

MD BLADENSBURG — A water main break caused a sinkhole in a suburban Washington neighborhood, swallowing up a family's car just after they escaped.

Television news footage showed the back right end of the car barely visible from the sinkhole in Bladensburg on Tuesday morning.

Luz Martinez, whose home was flooded by the water main break, told WRC-TV that a family was inside the car when the sinkhole opened. She said the family hadn't yet put on seat belts, helping them escape faster.

In her own home, Martinez said the water was up to her knees in the basement.

Area residents, including one barefoot woman, could be seen carrying garbage bags full of their belongings from their homes

in freezing temperatures. Sanitation crews were at the scene.

Toddler left in day care van found on street

NY ROCHESTER — Authorities said a 3-year-old boy left alone in a day care van was found wandering on a New York street.

Police told local media in Rochester that the boy was picked up around 8 a.m. Monday and fell asleep in a back seat of the van. Two workers unloaded the other children but apparently forgot about the toddler.

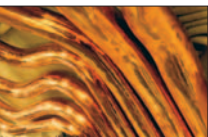
The workers then drove away with the boy still strapped into his seat and parked the van.

Police said the boy awoke and got out of the van. A motorist spotted him around 11 a.m., pulled over and called 911.

The two workers have been charged with endangering the welfare of a child.

7 zoo wallabies killed by disease in a year

VA NORFOLK — A parasite-borne disease has killed seven wallabies at the Virginia Zoo over the past 11 months. The Virginian-Pilot reported that the zoo's remaining wallabies have been quarantined.



The newspaper said zoo officials confirmed the deaths on Monday. The wallabies that died were among 10 that the zoo brought in from New Zealand last year.

Zoo veterinarian Dr. Amanda Guthrie said the wallabies don't have a natural immunity to the disease, toxoplasmosis, because it's not indigenous to New Zealand. Guthrie said she didn't expect the wallabies to be so susceptible to the disease in a short amount of time.

Executive Director Greg Bockheim said the zoo plans to bring in wallabies from other zoos that have survived in captivity for a period of time.

Man trapped in grain bin for 20 hours freed

IA LITTLEPORT — A man was treated at a hospital after being rescued from a north-east Iowa grain bin where he'd been trapped for nearly 20 hours.

Cedar Rapids television station KCRG reported that Rod Sylvester, 30, got buried up to his neck on Saturday, with only one arm free. Firefighters from the Littleport area responded to the farm and were able to free him on Sunday.

Clayton County authorities said Sylvester was treated at a hospital in Manchester and released.

From wire reports

FACES

Johnny Depp jokes about chupacabra to explain his absence

The Associated Press

Johnny Depp has recovered from a cold. And a chupacabra attack.

The 51-year-old actor was all smiles while joking Wednesday with journalists in Tokyo about why he was a no-show at a news conference a day earlier.

Depp explained he had been ill but said that wasn't the reason.

"I was attacked yesterday morning by a very rarely seen or experienced animal called chupacabra. I fought with it for hours. They're very persistent, very mean. And I'm pretty sure it came into my suitcase. I threw him off the 23rd floor. So we'll never see him again. Thank you for understanding," he said.

The chupacabra is a legendary creature rumored to inhabit parts of the Americas.

Depp's tale drew laughs from the crowd of reporters.

When asked what the title character in his latest film would do if he was in the room, Depp channeled the character and replied, "He would probably say some thing like 'How do you do? My name is Charlie Mortdecai and I've come here to take as much money from you as I possibly can... and jewelry, and art, and stuff.'"

More than 200 journalists were kept waiting for an hour before organizers canceled Tuesday's event because Depp was unwell.

"Mortdecai," an eccentric heist comedy, tanked at the box office, making an estimated \$4.1 million in North America and \$5.2 million elsewhere last weekend.

Depp has a huge fan base in Japan and said he hopes the film will be received well in the country.

"Mortdecai" will be released in Japan on Feb. 6.



EGUENE HOSHINO/AP

Johnny Depp poses for photographers prior to a press conference to promote his latest film, "Mortdecai," in Tokyo on Wednesday. Depp apologized for missing a press conference the day before.



Reboot starring Chris Pratt reportedly on the way

By JUSTIN MOYER
The Washington Post

It's 2016. Or 2017. Or 2018. The theater is packed for the reboot of Indiana Jones, the beloved franchise about a fedora-wearing, snake-fearing archaeologist helmed by Harrison Ford.

But, well into his 70s, Ford is a bit too old to put on the leather jacket again. So, this time around, the archaeologist is ... that dude from "Parks and Recreation?"

Pratt as Dr. Jones? This scenario may not come true. But that is the word on the street about a blockbuster yet-to-come.

"Disney has just started to turn its attention to reviving the Indiana Jones franchise after buying the rights from Paramount in 2013," Mike Fleming of Deadline Hollywood wrote. "I'm cautioned that while things are very early, I hear the studio has set its sights on Chris Pratt as the swashbuckling archaeologist."

In case anyone got too excited — or, depending on one's view of Pratt,

depressed — Fleming stressed his information was preliminary.

"Disney won't comment and all this is admittedly early, so let's chalk it up as a dishy informed rumor for now and keep an eye on it," he wrote.

Pratt recently proved he could lead an action-comedy franchise with "Guardians of the Galaxy." He'll also star in this year's reboot of the Jurassic Park franchise, "Jurassic World."

Some were measured in their enthusiasm. "I don't know if I'm crazy, but I sort of think he could pull off Indiana Jones?" USA Today's "For the Win" wrote. "I mean, it will be a bit of a stretch to imagine the guy who played the bumbling doofus of Andy Dwyer on Parks and Recreation could be a world-renowned archaeologist."

But given his deepening resume, making Pratt the torchbearer for another giant piece of cinema history — one likely worth hundreds of millions of dollars — seems logical.

"Hey, why not?" The Huffington Post wrote. "Give Pratt all the franchises. He's awesome."

Is Chris Pratt — star of "Guardians of the Galaxy" and the upcoming "Jurassic World" — going to helm another film franchise?

JOHN SHARER, INVISION/AP

'Selma' star Oyelowo supports Cumberbatch

"Selma" star David Oyelowo has voiced his support for fellow British actor Benedict Cumberbatch, who came under criticism for using the term "colored" in an interview.

Oyelowo, who plays Martin Luther King Jr. in "Selma," said the film's European premiere in London on Tuesday that people should focus on what Cumberbatch was saying — rather than the terminology he used.

Discussing diversity in the entertainment industry, Cumberbatch said last week on "Tavis Smiley" that "as far as colored actors go," there were more opportunities in the U.S. than Britain. "And that's something that needs to change," he said.

Cumberbatch later said sorry for his "thoughtless use of inappropriate language." He said he was "devastated to have caused offence by using this outmoded terminology."

Oyelowo defended Cumberbatch when asked about the comment. "In relation to Benedict it's definitely gone too far in terms of political correctness," said Oyelowo. "He was actually being very supportive of the likes of me, and other black actors and actresses — we do have greater opportunities in the U.S. in relation to the U.K."

"We use the term 'people of color' in America. Is that immensely different to what he said? I don't think so, just focus on what he was trying to say."

Other news

■ Joel Grey has publicly announced at age 82 that he is gay. The Oscar- and Tony-winning actor tells People magazine, "I don't like labels, but if you have to put a label on it, I'm a gay man." Grey was married to actress Jo Wilder for 24 years and they have two children together: actress Jennifer Grey and son James, a chef. He says, "It took time to embrace that other part of who I always was."

■ Imagine Dragons is ready to rock you — in the sky. The band and Southwest Airlines announced Monday that the group will perform a surprise concert at 35,000 feet on a Feb. 24 flight. Southwest will launch a sweepstakes on Feb. 3 for a fan and three friends to win tickets for the flight as well as concerts on the ground.

■ The Grammy Awards will feature a number of collaborative performances, including Lady Gaga with Tony Bennett and Adam Levine with Gwen Stefani. The Recording Academy said Tuesday that Annie Lennox will be paired with newcomer Hozier and Jessie J with Tom Jones at the Feb. 8 show.

■ Common and John Legend will perform their Oscar-nominated song "Glory" at the Academy Awards. The song is from the civil rights drama "Selma." The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences also announced Tuesday that "Let It Go" songwriters Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez are writing an original number for host Neil Patrick Harris.

■ Actress Katie Holmes is joining the drama "Ray Donovan" for its upcoming third season. She will play businesswoman Paige, a daughter of billionaire producer Andrew Finney, portrayed by Ian McShane.

■ Selections of Rolling Stone magazine's near 50-year archive will be available for free on Google Play. Rolling Stone made the announcement Wednesday. Articles from its archive will be available Friday for Android and iOS phones and tablets.

■ Funk legend Sly Stone was awarded \$5 million on Tuesday in a breach-of-contract suit that claimed his business partners and his own company cheated him out of royalties. A Los Angeles Superior Court jury ruled for the 71-year-old performer in his action against his ex-manager Gerald Goldstein, attorney Glenn Stone and Even St. Productions Ltd.

From wire services

WORLD

Tourists give hope to battered Lebanese city

By DIAA HADID
The Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Lebanon — As the tour group made its way through the narrow alleys of the seaside city of Tripoli, marveling at its medieval architecture, residents stared back at a sight that for them was just as exotic — visitors in their poor, restive corner of Lebanon.

"Foreigners!" residents called out to each other as the group of around 30 Lebanese and foreign tourists made their way through the Old City's labyrinth of cobblestone alleys, snapping pictures of centuries-old archways and graceful minarets. "We put you on our heads!" coffee seller Abu Mohammed, 65, said, using a traditional Arabic greeting for honored guests.

Tourists visiting Lebanon can ski in the mountains, frolic on sandy Mediterranean beaches, traipse around Roman ruins or stay out all night at Beirut's frenetic clubs. However, Lebanese and foreign visitors alike have stayed away from the mainly Sunni northern city of Tripoli as violence has flared over the conflict in neighboring Syria.

Mira Minkara, 35, hopes to help revive her city by introducing visitors, foreigners and Lebanese, to its rich cultural heritage. "I'm passionate about my city," said the tour guide, who has led a dozen groups through Tripoli in the past year, charging around \$20 per person. "I see there is a hunger for people to discover this old city ... that everybody is scared of."

The outbreak of the Syrian civil war aggravated tensions in Tripoli between residents of Bab al-Tabbaneh, an impoverished Sunni neighborhood where residents



BILAL HUSSEIN/AP

A tourist from Argentina takes a photograph with her tablet of a woman selling foraged greens during a day trip in Tripoli, Lebanon, on Jan. 17. The sight of tour groups invigorates residents of Tripoli, where visitors have been scarce because of violence in neighboring Syria.

support the Syrian uprising, and neighboring Jebel Mohsen, whose residents share Syrian President Bashar Assad's Alawite faith and largely support him.

Gunmen from the neighborhoods have clashed at least 20 times since 2012, regularly paralyzing the city and in effect isolating it from the rest of the country. Poverty has helped fuel Islamic extremism and support for radical groups fighting in Syria runs high. A suicide bombing at a cafe this month killed nine people.

Former Tourism Minister Fadi Abboud said the number of

tourists has dropped from thousands to hundreds in recent years — mostly Lebanese stopping to sample the city's famed sweets on their way to the mountains.

Minkara is the only guide taking foreigners to Tripoli, and her trips are sometimes delayed because of violence. Shortly after the Jan. 8 suicide bombing, she sought to ease concerns in an email to a group of prospective visitors.

"A good friend who works in state security ... told me it is calm," Minkara wrote. "I mean if Paris is not safe anymore, why would (you) be scared of Tripoli?"

She managed to reassure the group of 12 Lebanese and 18 foreigners — mostly aid workers and students living in Lebanon, from places as diverse as Argentina, Iran, and Denmark.

They spilled out of a bus at the al-Tal clock tower, built by an Ottoman sultan. Soldiers patrolled nearby, shoe shiners tapped their blocks, and vendors pushed carts of sesame-studded bread stuffed with cheese.

The group was led past stately buildings with Ottoman-style vaulted ceilings and ornate French-inspired balconies. They

plunged into narrow bazaars built by the Mamluks — a Muslim dynasty that pried the city back from the Crusaders in 1289 — where they elbowed past shops selling clothes, gold jewelry and sweet cheese rolled with cream and rose-petal jam, a Tripoli delicacy.

"It's very different from other Lebanese cities," said Guglielmo Gori, 26, an Italian student living in Beirut. "It is more Islamic; it has more of an Arabic taste."

Most of the tourists had come from Beirut, where most of the historic architecture was blasted to rubble during the civil war or demolished by developers who have rebuilt the city as a jumble of concrete high-rises.

"I'm 26, I'm Lebanese and I don't know Tripoli. It's shameful," said Beirut art gallery director Marc Mouarkeh. "It feels like the whole country has moved on a bit and Tripoli didn't."

The tour group wasn't able to see the sweeping interior of the Great Mosque because it was closed for prayers. At the domed Mamluk-era bathhouse, men waited patiently to bathe as Minkara showed the tourists around.

At the St. George Greek Orthodox Church, they admired a collection of golden icons and met Father Ibrahim Sarrouj, whose library was burned down last year amid specious rumors that he had insulted Islam. Christian and Muslim volunteers rebuilt the library together.

Sarrouj lamented the fortunes of his city, but said the tourists gave him hope.

"A small bird is a sign of the coming spring," he said.

Then the visitors departed, a church worker dimmed the lights, and they prepared for a funeral.

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OPINION

Netanyahu invitation reflects DC division

By JAY AMBROSE

Tribune News Service

In one constitutionally dubious, unilateral action after another over the years, President Barack Obama has shown that he thinks the U.S. government is him, him and — wait, a minute, is there a third party, maybe? Yes, it is him.

Now, it turns out that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is coming to Washington in early March to talk to that abused legislative branch called Congress about ways to keep Iran from going nuclear and wiping his country off the map, and guess how the president feels?

That's not OK. Everything should be him!

Some of us looking on from afar think it is in fact more than OK, that the president was out of line not to have invited this ally to come by the White House, too, and that an anonymous White House source should have his mouth taped for having said that Netanyahu "will pay a price" for this visit.

The really scary thing, though, is why the trip is necessary. It's the fear that this bumbling administration will negotiate a nuclear agreement with terrorist-aiding Iran with insufficient safeguards to prevent its proceeding happily on its weapons-of-mass-destruction path or fail to get any agreement at all because of no ill conse-

quences mapped out for stonewalling.

Understand that there is no reasonable doubt that Iran has been pursuing nuclear weaponry — we would not otherwise even be talking to them — and that the only way the United States and other involved countries could get them to discuss the matter in the first place was sanctions threatening to wreck the Iranian economy.

During the talks, though, our side has let up on the sanctions and Iran's economy has been traipsing toward happy days again. Meanwhile, according to knowledgeable voices, laxity on the part of America and its partners has been such that Iran has gotten closer than ever to bomb-making capability and may already have an intercontinental ballistic missile system capable of delivering some sneakily developed pride and joy to our shores some day.

Congress has responded sensibly — it wants tough, new sanctions against Iran if it does not agree to something clearly and lastingly keeping its leaders from their worst ambitions. Obama has said he would veto any legislation to that effect, warning it could lead to a war, and Republican House Speaker John Boehner invited Netanyahu to bring his contrary powers of persuasion to a joint session on March 3. Some people are making a big deal of Netanyahu standing for election a couple of weeks after that,

and a New York Times editorial is among the voices saying, hey, a vote for sanctions could "sabotage" a successful deal.

Some have also lambasted Republicans as total jerks in all of this — even though some of the toughest stances have been taken by such Democrats as Sen. Bob Menendez, of New Jersey, who said Obama seemed to be getting his "talking points" from Tehran. He and some other Democratic senators, however, are agreed on holding up a veto until near the end of March — several months before the third and final negotiating deadline — to see if Iran has conceded enough by that time to make breathing easy again.

I think a delay is wise enough, but to say there should be no threat of sanctions in the case of Iran refusing to do the right thing is absurd. The only deal such sanctions would sabotage would be a weak deal far more likely to end up in war than a strong deal. Netanyahu is playing politics. It is said, But if I were an Israeli voter, the thing that would most infuriate me would be that he was not seeking responsible U.S. action. I also believe congressional intervention is absolutely justified. Obama, after all, is not excluded in the fashion he has so often excluded Congress in his executive orders: He still has his veto power.

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service.

Apple's power affects how we adopt tech trends

By KATHY BENNER

Bloomberg News

Apple revealed blockbuster quarterly financial results Tuesday that were so big, so surprising and so good that the Internet strained to put the results into context, with one tweet wondering merely, "Did Apple buy the world yet."

The company sold a record number of iPhones — around 34,000 iPhones every hour, 24 hours day, for the entire first fiscal quarter. Sales grew to \$7.6 billion in the quarter, from \$57.6 billion a year earlier — a jump that is like tacking on all of eBay's annual revenue and then some in just three months. Profit jumped more than 37 percent to \$18 billion. At a time when overall cellphone prices have dropped, Apple can still charge \$649 for an iPhone in more places around the world.

Yes, at some point, that kind of growth will flatten or the margins will come in. Apple's markets will become saturated with jumbo iPhones or a product line — just like the iPod — will become obsolete. A new killer device will have to be found and sales will dip while the company tries to concoct a new, shiny piece of industrial design magic.

That's what you call a cycle — the business world equivalent of the circle of life. Worrying too much about it now ignores what Apple has done and why the company remains such an important force in tech innovation.

Apple has created products that work so well that customers aren't just snapping them up in record numbers; customers trust its products to ease them into tech trends that have yet to blow them away,

such as fitness tracking and cars that run apps, and get them to adopt tech trends they were slower to adopt, such as mobile wallets, non-contract home devices (aka the Internet of things).

Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook told investors that his hopes lie in the company's latest software platform initiatives — HealthKit, HomeKit, CarPlay, Apple Pay. Apple didn't come up with any of those technologies first. But the device that controls this software, the iPhone, is proving to be an ever-more-popular remote control for our lives, so those platforms have a shot at becoming the most popular ones.

Apple Pay is a great example of how Apple has helped spur adoption of a trend far better than other companies have. Cook wouldn't break out actual numbers, but he notes that at Panera Bread, 80 percent of mobile payment transactions are made via Apple Pay. Whole Foods has seen mobile payments increase by more than 400 percent since the payment software was introduced in its stores. While those numbers represent a tiny payment base, Apple's mobile wallet results are better than anything PayPal, Square or Google have been able to produce.

The iPhone's popularity — and the related popularity of Apple's app store and other related software — is giving a boost to the app developers who create for the Apple ecosystem. The tech blog Cult of Mac notes that iOS app developers earned more last year than the film industry did from U.S. box office revenues. Adoption of software such as Apple Pay also helps out the big companies — say, Visa — that partner with Apple.

An entire ecosystem of startups build devices that work with the iPhone; those

devices include the early iteration of the Square credit card reader and miniaturized lab diagnostics devices that can be plugged into a smartphone and give real-time test results. Some of these devices are being designed to work first with Apple. And huge companies such as Qualcomm and Samsung — two of the only companies that can produce the components Apple needs at the scale that it requires — benefit greatly when Apple uses their chips.

If consumers embrace the Apple Watch, the smartwatch could add to the overall virtuous circle of Apple's hardware and software, of consumers trying new stuff and companies making new stuff.

Apple has been pretty good for investors too. Business Insider notes that the information technology sector is expected to show 3.8 percent growth for the fourth quarter of 2014, but only 0.1 percent growth if you take Apple out of the mix.

I don't actually think that the company makes the very best software. (I have an avowed dislike of iTunes and think that the battery life of Apple devices is usually terrible.) But Apple has created an extraordinary — and extraordinarily profitable — world of hardware and software that consumers have embraced. That popularity is helping to drive more useful innovation and interest in tech than most of the moonshots we read about every day.

What will be more interesting to see is how the Apple halo continues to light up so much of the tech landscape, then see what takes off and succeeds before that light ignites dimly.

Kathy Benner is a tech columnist with Bloomberg View.

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OPINION

Trial alters 'reckless' view of CIA mission

By WALTER PINCUS

The Washington Post

The convoluted Monday of former CIA case officer Jeffrey Sterling for leaking classified information to a reporter requires a review of the CIA's once-covert operation to slow down Iran's nuclear program.

The CIA effort, which began in 1997, tried to use a former Russian nuclear engineer to misguide Tehran's scientists pursuing a nuclear bomb. The engineer was to pass on flawed Russian plans for a nuclear triggering device.

The complicated spy operation ended in January 2006 after it was disclosed in James Risen's book "State of War."

Called "Operation Merlin" by Risen — after the engineer's code name — the program was described as not only a failure but as "one of the most reckless operations in the modern history of the CIA." Risen said it was one that "they have helped put nuclear weapons in the hands of a charter member of what President George W. Bush called the 'axis of evil.'"

In the intervening eight years, stories about this onetime highly secret CIA operation have continued to describe it as a botched effort and one that might have actually helped Iran. Those descriptions, of course, were based on the assumption that all the facts in the book were true.

But what has long been ignored were CIA warnings, starting in January 2006, that the book contained "serious inaccuracies" and that often anonymous sources were "unreliable."

Back then, the disinformation operation details were still classified, the CIA could not provide facts to journalists to support government claims that some of the book's information was incorrect.

The same problem occurred when, on



KEVIN WOLF/AP

Former CIA officer Jeffrey Sterling leaves the federal courthouse in Alexandria, Va., on Monday, with his wife, Holly, after being convicted of leaking classified details of an operation to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions to a journalist.

Jan. 6, 2011, the Justice Department announced Sterling's indictment, charging him with, among other things, leaking classified information about Merlin to Risen.

Neither Justice nor the CIA would describe what that "false and misleading information" was, and as a result hardly any stories about the indictment referred to the government's claims about bad information.

Several times in the past two years, when I wrote about the Sterling case and Risen's refusal to testify about his sources, my efforts to get that false information were unsuccessful. But Sterling's trial

over the past two weeks provided a fuller, now-declassified background of the Merlin operation, showing what a complex effort it was. Government witnesses and agency memos challenged facts in the Risen book and showed the Merlin operation was still going until January 2006.

Publication of Risen's book "shut it down completely and made all of our efforts for naught" was the court testimony on Jan. 14 of Bob S., who was the CIA's operations director in its nuclear counterproliferation unit and overseer of the Merlin program.

Risen's attorney, Joel Kurtzberg, said in an email that neither he nor Risen would have any comment.

Risen's book says that "The Russian was supposed to believe that he was handing over genuine nuclear designs."

In Vienna in late February 2000 to deliver the materials to an Iranian mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Russian, according to Risen's book, "unsealed the envelope with the nuclear bomb." Risen gave the CIA a copy of his own to the Iranians. No matter what the CIA told him, he was going to hedge his bets. There was obviously something wrong with these blueprints — so he decided to mention that fact to the Iranians in his letter."

Risen's book reprints the letter, saying the Russian gave the CIA a copy of his own to the Iranians. No matter what the CIA told him, he was going to hedge his bets. There was obviously something wrong with these blueprints — so he decided to mention that fact to the Iranians in his letter."

The CIA trial witnesses and agency memos tell a different story. The agency plan always was that the schematics and drawings would have some obvious flaws — and the Russian engineer was told about them. It also was part of the plan to have the CIA's nuclear materials were to be accompanied by a letter from the Russian noting some errors. A Jan. 10, 2000, CIA memo carries a draft of what it describes as "the letter to be included in the package of material."

It has elements almost word for word found in the letter as printed in the Risen book, but it was written cooperatively with CIA input and made part of the document package for the Iranians more than a month before the Russian arrived in Vienna.

A second CIA memo that day said that the letter draft would "acknowledge that what he is providing initially is incomplete" and in it "there should be a very clear message that he expects to be paid for the rest of the details they will need if they want to build the device."

That was the hook that was supposed to get the Iranians to stay in touch with Merlin.

The Russian dropped off the package on March 3, 2000, according to a May 5, 2000, CIA memo, which reported that the deception materials were taken "seriously" by the Iranians who "couriered them back to Iran rather than rejecting them at the outset."

The next step was to see whether the Iranian would try to contact the Russian.

Bob S. testified that no contact had been made before the Risen book was published but that the agency had expected it could take years before the Iranians got to a point where they were attempting to build the triggering device.

In fact, the CIA reported in a 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that Iran may have halted nuclear warhead activity in 2003, at least temporarily.

The Sterling case should be a lesson that not all secret information passed to journalists is totally true and that government claims that such information may be inaccurate are not totally true.

What is true is that the whole story of Merlin would make a great movie.

Walter Pincus reports on intelligence, defense and foreign policy for The Washington Post and writes the Fire Print column.

Biological evolution must catch up to nuclear threat

By DAVID P. BARASH

Most people can be forgiven for ignoring the threat posed by nuclear weapons. It might seem surprising, but we have been preprogrammed by our own evolutionary history to engage in such ignorance. The nuclear age is just a tiny blip tacked on to our very recent phylogenetic past, so when it comes to the greatest of all risks to human survival, we are more threatened by the instincts we lack than by those we possess.

And yet, we are genuinely threatened by those weapons we possess, which the United States government is planning to upgrade at an estimated cost of \$1 trillion over the next three decades. Parity in response, last week the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists reset its iconic Doomsday Clock from five minutes to midnight to three minutes and counting.

How does evolution create our ignorance, thereby adding to our danger? Because its two terms — biological and cultural — are connected, and so are we, from our own self-interest.

Homo sapiens is the product of biological evolution — a painfully slow Darwinian process — yet we are simultaneously enmeshed in its cultural counterpart, a Lamarckian phenomenon that, by contrast, is blindingly fast and proceeds under its own rules. We have one foot thrust into the cultural present and the other stuck in our biological past.

Individuals, after all, do not evolve in the Darwinian sense; only populations and lineages do. And they are shackled to the realities of genetics and reproduction, since

organic evolution is a process whereby gene frequencies change over time. Accordingly, generations are required for even the smallest evolutionary step.

By contrast, cultural evolution is astoundingly rapid. Acquired characteristics can be "inherited," a la Lamarck, in hours or days, then passed along to other individuals, modified yet again before being picked up or dropped altogether. For example, in just a few decades (less than an instant in biological time), personal computers were developed, proliferated and modified. If they had "evolved" by Darwinian, biological means, as a favorable mutation to be promoted in one or even a handful of individuals, there would currently be only a dozen or so computer users instead of billions.

Just a superficial glance at human history shows today's world is vastly different from that of a century ago, which is almost unimaginably different from 50,000 years ago. And yet a Cro-Magnon baby, magically plunked down at birth in 21st-century America, could very well find herself comfortably reading on her iPad, and offspring of today's technophiles could adapt to the world of saber-toothed cats and stone axes.

Consider that stone ax. The history of civilization is, in large part, one of ever-greater efficiency in killing, as in the progression from club, knife and spear, to bow and arrow, musket, rifle, cannon, battleship, bomber and nuclear-tipped ICBM. At the same time, the human being who creates and manipulates these devices has not changed much at all.

As a biological creature, in fact, Homo

sapiens is poorly adapted for killing, given his puny nails, minimal jaws and laughably feeble teeth. But cultural evolution has made it not only possible but easy.

This biology-culture disconnect is especially acute in the realm of nuclear weapons. At the one-year anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, Albert Einstein famously noted that "the splitting of the atom has changed everything, but our way of thinking; hence we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

He might have been talking about musk oxen. Those shaggy Arctic beasts have long employed a very effective strategy when confronted by their enemies: wolves. They head the juveniles into a corner while the adults face outward, arrayed like the spokes of a wheel. Even the hungry wolf finds it intimidating to confront a wall of sharp horns and bony foreheads, backed by 1,000 pounds of angry pot roast. For countless generations, their behavior saved musk oxen's bell.

But in modern times, their primary threat hasn't been wolves, but human hunters carrying high-powered rifles. Today, musk oxen would do better if they spread out and high-tailed it toward the horizon, but instead they respond as previous generations always have — forming their defensive circle — and are easily slaughtered.

Human actions changed everything but the musk ox way of thinking; as they clung to their biology they drifted toward unparalleled catastrophe, until another human action (conservation) intervened.

Humans are stuck at (or remain unconsciously influenced by) our biology. That

stubbornness is especially evident when it comes to thinking, or not thinking, about nuclear weapons.

Take, for example, this widespread difficulty: When told something is "hot," most of us readily think in terms of boiling water or burning wood. The biological creature within cannot effectively grasp the meaning of millions of degrees. Before the atomic age, splitting the atom and pronouncing nuclear explosions had never occurred on Earth. Even in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are unprepared to wrap our minds around them, including the vast scale of destruction, deaths by the millions, and in minutes.

And so the conflict between our biological nature and our cultural products cloaks nuclear weapons in a kind of psychological untouchability.

But does this mean that things are hopeless, that we are the helpless victims of this aspect of our human nature? As Carl Sagan emphasized, eliminating nuclear weapons is certainly not building more or upgrading what we have — is a basic requirement of species-wide sanity and good planetary hygiene.

The missiles, bombers, bombs and warheads in our nuclear arsenal are our own creation, our own responsibility, not something imposed upon us by a malignant God. And we are not so much adaptable creatures, probably the only ones capable of acting, consciously, in our own self-interest. Once we stop acting like musk oxen.

David P. Barash is an evolutionary biologist and professor of psychology at the University of Washington. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

WBA super flyweight title.

NHL

Roundup

Isles stay perfect against Rangers

The Associated Press

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Jaroslav Halak faced more traffic on the ice inside than in the snow outside. He handled both nearly flawlessly and carried the New York Islanders to yet another win over the New York Rangers.

Halak stopped 40 shots, falling 8.1 seconds short of his second consecutive shutout of the Rangers, and the Islanders beat their biggest rivals 4-1 on Tuesday night in their return from the NHL All-Star break.

"There was nothing outside on the roads," Halak said one day after a snowstorm blanketed the area. "It was easy for us coming in, no cars. It took me less time than usual."

The Islanders have won all three meetings this season with the Rangers, taking the first two at Madison Square Garden and outscoring them 13-4 overall. Halak beat them 3-0 on Jan. 13.

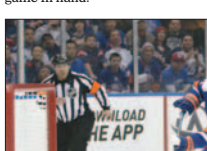
"It looked almost the same," Rangers coach Alain Vigneault said. "They came out real well. I don't know if it was us mishandling (the puck) or a combination of that and them forcing us into mistakes, but we made some bad decisions that really cost us."

The Islanders had a shutout streak of 122 minutes, a second — their longest against the Rangers, whom they have never blanked in consecutive games.

Carl Hagelin spoiled Halak's shutout bid in the closing seconds.

"Obviously it's disappointing, but we got a win," said Halak, who has 26 wins this season. "It's not like it was a 1-0 game."

"Hopefully next time I will have more luck at the end," said the Islanders (32-14) enjoyed a good night after nearly facing a weather postponement. They are tied with Detroit at 61 points atop the Eastern Conference, with a game in hand.



Ducks 4, Canucks 0: Frederik Andersen made 17 saves in his third career shutout as visiting Anaheim defeated Vancouver.

Matt Beleskey, Kyle Palmieri, Rickard Rakell and Patrick Maroon scored for the Ducks (32-10-6), who sit atop the NHL's overall standings. They have won six straight and eight in nine.

Blue Jackets 4, Capitals 3: Cam Atkinson and Fedor Tyutin each had a goal and an assist, and Curtis McElhinney made 25 saves to lead Columbus.

Flyers 4, Coyotes 3 (SO): Wayne Simmonds scored in regulation and got the winning goal in a shootout to help the Flyers. **Penguins 5, Jets 3:** David Perron and Brandon Sutter scored power-play goals less than 4 minutes apart in the third period and the host Penguins rallied.

Hurricanes 4, Lightning 2: Eric Staal and Justin Faulk each had a goal and an assist to lift the Hurricanes.

Canadiens 3, Stars 2: Carey Price stopped 40 saves for his 25th victory of the season as the host Canadiens held off the Stars.

Red Wings 5, Panthers 4: Luke Glendening scored twice and Stephen Weiss had a goal and two assists against his former team to lift the visiting Red Wings to their sixth straight victory.

Predators 4, Avalanche 3 (OT): Craig Smith scored on a breakaway at 2:46 of overtime for the host Predators.

Flames 4, Sabres 1: Flames rookie Johnny Gaudreau scored twice to lead host Calgary past Buffalo, extending the Sabres' team-record losing streak to 12 games.

Wild 2, Oilers 1: Charlie Coyle scored the tiebreaking goal on a breakaway with 4:23 remaining to lift visiting Minnesota over Edmonton.



Islanders left wing Matt Martin (17) shoots into an empty net for the team's second goal against the Rangers Tuesday.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA
Detroit	48	28	11	9	64	154/123
Tampa Bay	49	30	15	4	64	158/131
Montreal	46	30	13	3	63	106/68
Boston	48	25	16	7	57	126/121
Florida	45	20	19	6	50	111/127
Ottawa	46	19	18	9	47	126/128
Toronto	48	22	23	3	47	142/150
Buffalo	48	14	31	3	31	90/171

Metropolitan Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA
N.Y. Islanders	47	21	14	12	65	155/130
Pittsburgh	47	27	12	8	62	143/120
N.Y. Rangers	49	20	17	12	52	135/135
Washington	47	24	14	9	57	140/124
Philadelphia	49	20	22	7	47	134/149
Columbus	46	22	18	6	45	117/127
New Jersey	49	20	22	8	42	107/143
Carolina	47	17	25	5	39	102/122

Western Conference

Central Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA
Nashville	46	31	10	5	67	141/107
St. Louis	46	29	13	4	62	148/111
Chicago	47	30	15	2	62	148/108
Winnipeg	49	26	15	8	60	138/127
Colorado	49	20	18	11	51	129/141
Dallas	47	21	19	7	49	146/154
Minnesota	47	21	20	6	48	130/138

Pacific Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA
Anaheim	48	12	30	7	30	143/124
San Jose	48	25	17	6	56	131/132
Vancouver	46	26	17	3	55	124/118
Edmonton	48	20	20	8	48	140/126
Los Angeles	47	20	15	12	52	129/126
Calgary	47	21	20	6	48	136/138
Seattle	48	12	27	9	33	110/160

NOTE: All points are for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's games
Philadelphia, 4, Arizona, 3; 50 N.Y. Islanders, 4, N.Y. Rangers 1 (Redmond, Mitchell), 11:52.
Pittsburgh, 4, Tampa Bay, 2; 32 Montreal, 3, Dallas, 2.
Detroit, 5, Florida, 4.
Nashville, 4, Colorado, 3; OT.
Calgary, 4, Buffalo, 1.
Nashville, 2, Edmonton 1.
Anaheim, 4, Vancouver 0.

Wednesday's games
Toronto at New Jersey.
Pittsburgh at Washington.
Chicago at Los Angeles.

Thursday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
Arizona at Toronto.
Dallas at Ottawa.
Detroit at Tampa Bay.
Columbus at Florida.
Colorado at St. Louis.
Minnesota at Calgary.
Edmonton at Montreal.
Anaheim at San Jose.

Friday's games
Pittsburgh vs. New Jersey.
St. Louis at Carolina.
Carolina vs. Philadelphia.
Buffalo at Vancouver.
Chicago at Anaheim.

Saturday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
Arizona at Toronto.
Dallas at Ottawa.
Detroit at Tampa Bay.
Columbus at Florida.
Colorado at St. Louis.
Minnesota at Calgary.
Edmonton at Montreal.
Anaheim at San Jose.

Sunday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
Arizona at Toronto.
Dallas at Ottawa.
Detroit at Tampa Bay.
Columbus at Florida.
Colorado at St. Louis.
Minnesota at Calgary.
Edmonton at Montreal.
Anaheim at San Jose.

Monday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
Arizona at Toronto.
Dallas at Ottawa.
Detroit at Tampa Bay.
Columbus at Florida.
Colorado at St. Louis.
Minnesota at Calgary.
Edmonton at Montreal.
Anaheim at San Jose.

Tuesday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
Arizona at Toronto.
Dallas at Ottawa.
Detroit at Tampa Bay.
Columbus at Florida.
Colorado at St. Louis.
Minnesota at Calgary.
Edmonton at Montreal.
Anaheim at San Jose.

Wednesday's games
Toronto at New Jersey.
Pittsburgh at Washington.
Chicago at Los Angeles.

Thursday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
Arizona at Toronto.
Dallas at Ottawa.
Detroit at Tampa Bay.
Columbus at Florida.
Colorado at St. Louis.
Minnesota at Calgary.
Edmonton at Montreal.
Anaheim at San Jose.

Friday's games
Pittsburgh vs. New Jersey.
St. Louis at Carolina.
Carolina vs. Philadelphia.
Buffalo at Vancouver.
Chicago at Anaheim.

Saturday's games
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia.
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia.
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Ducks goalie Frederik Andersen, left, is congratulated Tuesday by Ryan Kesler after earning a shutout during the team's 4-0 win over the Canucks in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Predators 4, Avalanche 3 (OT)

Colorado 1 1 1 0 0
Nashville 0 2 1 1 4

First Period—1, Colorado, McLeod 4 (Redmond, Mitchell), 11:52.

Second Period—2, Nashville, Josi 8 (Weber, Ribeiro), 8:56.
C. Wilson 15 (Jones, Ribeiro), 13:21 (pp).

Third Period—1, Colorado, Iginla 15 (Duchene, Tanguay), 16:05.

Goals—Colorado, Forsberg 16-12, 6 Colorado, Holden 4 (Lundeskog, Barrie), 19:24.

Overtime—7, Nashville, Cr. Smith 14 (Ribeiro, Weber), 2:46.

Shots on Goal—Colorado 5-9-7-3-24.
Nashville 9-14-15-2-38.

Power-play opportunities—Colorado 0 of 2; Nashville 1 of 2.

Goals—Colorado, Varlamov 12-10 (39 shots-35 saves), Nashville, Hutton 2-4 (26-21).

A-15:56 (7,113), T-2:34.

Canadiens 3, Stars 2

Dallas 1 1 1 0 2
Montreal 2 1 0 3

First Period—1, Montreal, Emelin 2 (Prust, Gilbert, 6:07, 2, Montreal, Galtchuk 13 (Beaulieu, Gonchar), 9:53.

Second Period—4, Montreal, Gallagher 12 (Subban, Markov), 4:37 (pp), 5, Dallas, Eaves 4 (Sequin, Ja. Berni), 10:05 (pp).

Third Period—None.

Shots on Goal—Dallas 16-16-10-42.
Montreal 9-10-7-26.

Power-play opportunities—Dallas 1 of 5; Montreal 1 of 5.

Goals—Dallas, Letourneau 19-11 (26 shots-23 saves), Montreal, Price 25-10-2 (42-40).

A-21:26 (21,273), T-2:38.

Red Wings 5, Panthers 4

Detroit 1 4 0 5
Florida 2 1 1 4

First Period—1, Detroit, Miller 3 (Ericsson), 8:06 (sh), 2, Detroit, Barkov 5 (Bjugstad, Ekblad), 9:08 (pp), 3, Florida, Pirri 5 (B. Campbell, Jokinen), 10:16 (pp).

Second Period—4, Detroit, Zetterberg 15 (Abedkader, Nyquist), 3:2, 5, Detroit, Glendening 5 (Weiss, Sheahan), 7:07.

Third Period—6, Detroit, Glendening 6 (Weiss), 11:19, 8, Florida, Bjugstad 16 (Ekblad, Barkov), 15:00 (pp).

Shots on Goal—Detroit 9-9-9-27.
Florida 10-16-15-42.

Power-play opportunities—Detroit 0 of 1; Florida 3 of 5.

Goals—Detroit, Mrazek 10-11 (41 shots-37 saves), Florida, Luongo 17-18 (17-12), Montoya (22-23 second, 10-10).

A-12:19 (17,060), T-2:34.

Islanders 4, Rangers 1

N.Y. Rangers 0 0 1 1
N.Y. Islanders 1 1 2 4

First Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Grabovski 7 (Bailey, Boychuk), 18:05.

Second Period—2, N.Y. Islanders, Martin 9 (Nielsen, De Haan), 6:12, 4, N.Y. Islanders, Tavares 22 (Hamonic, Boychuk), 16:47 (pp).

Third Period—3, N.Y. Islanders, Strome 9 (Nielsen, De Haan), 6:12, 4, N.Y. Islanders, Halak 25-9 (41-40).

Shots on Goal—N.Y. Rangers 10-18-13-5.
N.Y. Islanders 17-11-10-38.

Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Rangers 4 of 3; N.Y. Islanders 1 of 3.

Goals—N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 23-10 (38 shots-34 saves), N.Y. Islanders, Halak 25-9 (41-40).

A-16:17 (16,170), T-2:33.

Blue Jackets 4, Capitals 3

Washington 0 2 1 3
Columbus 0 3 1 4

First Period—1, Columbus, Strome 5 (Trop, Johnson), 3:45, 2, Columbus, Johnson 18 (Connaughton, Foligno), 15:39.

Second Period—3, Washington, Backstrom 16:12, 4, Washington, Tyutin 2 (Adkins, Shurt), 19:04, 5, Washington, Brouwer 13 (Niskanen, Kuznetsov), 19:40.

Third Period—5, Columbus, Atkinson 9 (Tyutin, Foligno), 5:20, 7, Washington, Kuznetsov 5 (Johnson, Carlson), 12:09.

Shots on Goal—Washington 12-15-28.
Columbus 6-12-12-30.

Power-play opportunities—Washington 0 of 3; Columbus 0 of 5.

Goals—Washington, Holtby 23-10 (30 shots-26 saves), Columbus, McElhinney 5-6 (13-25).

A-16:54 (18,144), T-2:22.

Flyers 4, Coyotes 3 (SO)

Arizona 0 1 0 3
Philadelphia 1 2 0 4

Philadelphia won shootout 1-0.

First Period—1, Arizona, Murphy 3 (Eratt, Campbell), 3:32, 2, Arizona, Eratt 7 (Ekmann, Larson, Doan), 5:50, 3, Philadelphia, Simmonds 17 (Streit, Giguere), 9:02 (pp).

Second Period—4, Philadelphia, Umberger 9 (MacDonald, Couturier), 13:55, 5, Philadelphia, Del Zotto 4 (Voracek, Samer, 18:59, 6, Arizona, Rieder (Doan, Vermette), 19:22.

Shots on Goal—Arizona 9-9-9-27.
Philadelphia 10-16-15-42.

Power-play opportunities—Arizona 0 of 4; Philadelphia 2 of 4.

Goals—Arizona, Smith 7-20 (42 shots-39 saves), Philadelphia, Emery (4-2), Mason 2-12 (6-18).

A-15:51 (19,541), T-2:28.

Penguins 5, Jets 3

Winnipeg 0 2 1 3
Pittsburgh 1 1 3 5

First Period—1, Pittsburgh, Spaling 7 (Perron, Letang), 7:09.

Second Period—2, Winnipeg, Thorburn 5 (Lowry, Kane, Trost), 2:13, 3, Winnipeg, Trouba 5 (Kane, Byrum), 12:47, 4, Pittsburgh, Brouwer 10 (Letang, Kunitz), 4:23 (pp), 7, Pittsburgh, Surort 10 (Martin, Letang), 7:52 (pp).

Third Period—5, Winnipeg, Lowry 6 (Brouwer, Letang), 5:58, 7, Pittsburgh, Perron 11 (Letang, Kunitz), 4:23 (pp), 7, Pittsburgh, Surort 10 (Martin, Letang), 7:52 (pp).

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 5-9-9-22.
Pittsburgh 9-12-10-30.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 0 of 0; Pittsburgh 2 of 3.

Goals—Winnipeg, Pavelec 12-11-6 (29 shots-35 saves), Pittsburgh, Letang 5-2-3 (22-19).

A-16:27 (18,387), T-2:19.

KATHY WILLEMS/AP

NHL/SPORTS BRIEFS

Winningest goalie Brodeur calls it a career

42-year-old will join St. Louis's front office

By R.B. FALLSTROM
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Martin Brodeur is retiring to take a front office job with the St. Louis Blues. The New Jersey Devils have a spot waiting for one of the greatest goaltenders in NHL history whenever he is ready to come back home.

"Absolutely. He is aware of that and has always been aware of that," Devils president and general manager Lou Lamoriello said Tuesday. "He could have come back even now if he wanted to."

The 10-time All-Star and four-time Vezina Trophy winner finished his career with St. Louis after a standout, two-decade run with New Jersey. A news conference was set for Thursday morning before the Blues return from the All-Star break to play Nashville.

"It's kind of sad to see a guy like him hang 'em up," said Brian Elliott, the Blues' All-Star goalie. "I'm sure it's a tough decision, but I was grateful to be on the same team with him if only for a little bit."

The 42-year-old Brodeur wrapped up his 22-year career with St. Louis after signing as a free agent on Dec. 2. He was 3-3 with a 2.87 goals-against average



MARK ZALESKI/AP

St. Louis Blues goalie Martin Brodeur, one of the greatest goaltenders in NHL history, is retiring. He starred for years with the New Jersey Devils and is now with St. Louis.

and in his final victory became the fifth-oldest goalie to post a shutout in a 3-0 win over Colorado on Dec. 29.

He last played on Jan. 2 in a loss at Anaheim and had not returned since being granted a one-week

leave of absence on Jan. 14. Brodeur had dropped to third on the depth chart after Elliott returned from a knee injury, with 24-year-old Jake Allen sharing the position, but teammates are happy he'll still be around to help.

By the numbers

3

The number of Stanley Cups won with the New Jersey Devils.

125

The number of shutouts in 1,266 career appearances.

204

The record number of games started in the postseason.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

"It's an extremely smart move," forward Alexander Steen said. "All the experience and all that stuff is so valuable to have in an organization. That stuff spreads."

Brodeur played his first 21 seasons with the Devils, who did not re-sign him after committing to Cory Schneider as the No. 1 goalie.

The Montreal native was 691-397-176 with a 2.24 goals-against average, 912 save percentage and 125 shutouts in 1,266 career appearances. He holds regular-season NHL records for wins, games and minutes.

Brodeur also holds postseason records for starts (204) and shutouts (24), and is second in wins (113). He appeared in 70 or more games in 10 consecutive seasons from 1997-98 to 2007-08.

He won three Stanley Cups with the Devils and was a two-time Olympic gold medalist with Team Canada in 2002 and 2010.

Devils center Scott Gomez won two Stanley Cups with Brodeur and remembered a player so handy with the stick it prompted an NHL rule change. Jaromir Jagr said having Brodeur in goal was like having an extra half defenseman who could start breakouts.

"So many new goaltenders come in the league and it's kind of incredible for him to adjust and stay in that game for such a long time," Jagr said. "I don't think anybody can do that again, in any sport. Maybe (Peyton) Manning if he keeps playing, because quarterback is that type of position."

AP Sports Writer Tom Canavan contributed to this report.

Briefly

Marlins finalize \$2M, 1-year deal with OF Suzuki

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Ichiro Suzuki has passed his physical and finalized a \$2 million, one-year deal with the Miami Marlins.

The Marlins made the announcement Tuesday night.

Suzuki signed the deal in his native Japan. A news conference will be held there for him Thursday.

The 41-year-old Suzuki, a 10-time All-Star and 10-time Gold Glove winner, is expected to be

the team's fourth outfielder behind Giancarlo Stanton, Christian Yelich and Marcell Ozuna.

■ The Baltimore Orioles have acquired outfielder Travis Snider from the Pittsburgh Pirates for a minor league pitcher and a player to be named.

■ The San Francisco Giants and shortstop Brandon Crawford have avoided arbitration by agreeing to a one-year contract for \$3,175,000.

■ The Texas Rangers have acquired right-hander Anthony Ranaudo from the Boston Red Sox for left-hander Robbie Ross.

2 ex-Vanderbilt players convicted of rape

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A jury convicted two ex-Vanderbilt football players on Tuesday of raping a former student, rejecting claims that they were too drunk to know what they were doing and that a

college culture of binge drinking and promiscuous sex should be blamed for the attack.

The jury deliberated for three hours before announcing that Brandon Vandenburg and Cory Batey were guilty.

Both men were convicted of four counts of aggravated rape, one count of attempted aggravated rape and two counts of aggravated sexual battery. They face decades in prison when they are sentenced March 6.

Williams sisters, Keys picked for Fed Cup team

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — U.S. captain Mary Joe Fernandez announced Wednesday that 18-time major champion Serena Williams and seven-time Grand Slam winner Venus Williams will join Australian Open semifinalist Madison Keys and 30th-ranked Varvara Lepchenko on the Fed Cup team that faces Argentina in Buenos Aires on Feb. 7-8.

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL/AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Top 25 roundup

Davis lifts Xavier by Hoyas

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It never hurts to try something different after a bunch of unsuccessful out-of-town trips. Xavier broke the routine with a game-day visit to House Speaker — and school alum — John Boehner at the U.S. Capitol, then showed up at the Verizon Center a half-dozen blocks away and beat Georgetown for the second time this season.

Myles Davis scored 19 points in his third start of the season, and the Musketeers held the No. 21 Hoyas without a field goal for more than 11 minutes in the first half Tuesday night in a 66-53 victory that snapped a five-game road losing streak.

"It took us too long to finally get one," Davis said. "But we finally got one against a great team."

Xavier (14-7, 5-4 Big East) had been 4-0 at home and 0-4 on the road in conference play, but the Musketeers cut off passing lanes and effectively used double-teams to shut down Georgetown's motion offense and forced 17 turnovers. Aaron Bowen made a layup with 11:17 remaining in the first half, and the Hoyas didn't make another field goal until Isaac Copeland's mid-range buzzer-beater made the score 29-16 at halftime.

Georgetown (14-6, 6-3) got as close as seven late in the second half, but then went cold again — going more than three minutes without a field goal — as Xavier closed with a 12-6 run to knock the Hoyas out of first place in the Big East. They trail Villanova and Providence (both 5-2) by percentage points.

"We dug a hole for ourselves against a good team," Georgetown coach John Thompson III said. "The hole was just too deep to climb out of."

No. 14 VCU 72, George Washington 48: Freshman Terry Larrier scored 15 points and host VCU pulled away with a 16-2 run early in the second half for its 12th consecutive victory.



Nick Wass/AP

Xavier guard Myles Davis takes a shot against Georgetown guard D'Vaunte Smith-Rivera during the first half on Tuesday in Washington. Xavier won 66-53.

Larrier's point total was his highest since conference play began for the Rams (17-3, 7-0 Atlantic 10), and it came on a night when VCU scoring leader Trevon Graham managed just seven points on a still-tender left ankle and struggling Melvin Johnson continued to do so, scoring eight on 4-for-10 shooting.

No. 17 West Virginia 65, Kansas State 59: Tarik Phillip matched a career-high 12 points and West Virginia, relying on its high-pressure defense, shut down host Kansas State for a victory.

In a game marred by fouls and poor play, the Mountaineers (17-3, 5-2 Big 12) forced the Wildcats (12-9, 5-3) into 25 turnovers while holding them to 36 percent shooting from the field.

Oklahoma State 64, No. 20 Baylor 53: Phil Forte scored 16 points and Le'Bryan Nash added 13 to help host Oklahoma State.

Forte, a 5-foot-11 shooting guard, made four of seven three-pointers and matched a career high with five rebounds for the Cowboys, who claimed their second win over a ranked opponent this season.

US teen eliminates Venus

By DENNIS PASSA

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Venus Williams lost her quarterfinal match against Madison Keys on Wednesday at the Australian Open. Serena Williams, the other sister in a family that has won a combined 25 Grand Slam singles titles, will attempt to right the wrong in the semifinals on Thursday.

The 19-year-old Keys overcame a left thigh injury to beat No. 18-ranked Venus 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 and advance to the last four against top-ranked and 18-time major winner Serena, who had little trouble beating last year's finalist, Dominika Cibulkova, 6-2, 6-2.

In men's play, top-seeded Novak Djokovic didn't face a break point against hard-serving Milos Raonic in beating the Canadian 7-6 (5), 6-4, 6-2 in exactly two hours to advance to his 25th Grand Slam semifinal. Djokovic may have dropped his serve once this tournament.

He broke Raonic early in each of the second and third sets and will play defending champion Stan Wawrinka, who earlier beat Kei Nishikori 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (6). Wawrinka led slip a 6-1 lead in the third-set tiebreaker and eventually needed six match points to close the victory on Rod Laver Arena.

Serena Williams made her win look easy despite suffering from a bad cold.

"I've been sick the past few days, and it's just getting worse and worse, but hopefully it will get better," Williams said. "I heard there's a virus going around with a lot of the players, and I think I caught it."

There had been some hope that the semis might feature an all-Williams matchup at a major for the first time in more than five years. The Williams sisters last met in a Grand Slam match at Wimbledon in 2009, when Serena won the final.

The semifinalists from the other half of the women's draw have already been determined — No. 2 Maria Sharapova will play No. 10-seeded Ekaterina Makarova, also on Thursday.

Serena's win doesn't bode well for the other three women left — all five past times Williams has advanced to the semifinals



Rob Griffith/AP

Madison Keys, right, is congratulated by compatriot Venus Williams after winning their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open Wednesday. Keys, 19, won 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

at Melbourne Park, she's won the tournament.

Venus Williams' loss ended an encouraging 10 days at Melbourne Park for the 34-year-old, seven-time Grand Slam singles champion. She hadn't advanced to the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam since the U.S. Open in 2010 and had struggled to recapture her earlier form after being diagnosed in 2011 with Sjogren's syndrome, an auto-immune disease that causes fatigue and joint pain.

"It already feels like a long season already, so many matches in a row," she said. "Hopefully I'll be able to keep this up."

Regardless of the quality of the match, in which the two players combined for 83 unforced errors, Keys was pleased to be through to the semis.

"It's amazing, you just have to embrace the moment," said Keys, who is now coached by three-time major winner Lindsay Davenport. "And I get to enjoy another moment next round."

She later identified her injury as a left adductor, and was optimistic it wouldn't affect her in her match against Serena. The same injury forced her to retire from her third-round match at Wimbledon last year.

Djokovic looked impressive as he proceeds towards a fifth Australian Open title, adding to the ones he captured in 2008 (his first major), and three years in a row from 2011.

With Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal gone from the other side of the draw, Andy Murray, if he beats Tomas Berdych in the other semifinal on Thursday, could be his major opposition for another trophy.

Djokovic said he was impressed with how well he played.

"Great, great performance," Djokovic said about himself. "Definitely no complaints. I returned every well, tried to get as many of the balls back in play."

Wawrinka looked to be cruising in his tiebreaker with Nishikori, but the Japanese player saved match point after match point with a combination of great shots and errors by Wawrinka.

Nishikori made the biggest error at the wrong time, however, attempting a drop shot from the back of the court that bundled into the net. That set up another match point for Wawrinka, which he converted with an ace, his 20th of the match.

"Phew, I'm still nervous," Wawrinka said in his post-match interview on court. "It's never easy with his returning. You have to go for it."

Nishikori said he had a difficult day.

"I was struggling with my serve ... I couldn't get good rhythm in the first and second set," Nishikori said. "He played really aggressive, great tennis. Mentally I was fine, I was ready to go. But he was a little bit better today."

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HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS PACIFIC

Going to the mat for their way to wrestle

Debate over freestyle or folkstyle in Pacific again coming to a head

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

A significant change to the way DODDS Pacific goes about its high school wrestling business could be in the cards, depending on which way athletics directors vote during a video conference slated for March.

On Tuesday, DODDS Pacific athletics coordinator Don Hobbs sent e-mail correspondence to ADs and coaches asking for input on a possible switch from the current international freestyle format to the collegiate folkstyle format favored by high schools and colleges in the States.

A vote for folkstyle would signal a fundamental change in how wrestling is officiated, coached and performed on the mats in the Pacific.

All DODDS Pacific interscholastic sports are governed by National Federation of State High School Association rules ... except wrestling, for which International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles (FILA) rules are used, those govern Olympic and world competitions.

It's a hot-button topic that has been the subject of spirited debate between two distinct camps: DODDS Japan and Okinawa and Kanto Plain international schools, which want to stay freestyle, and Japan and Korea outlying schools, which favor a switch.

DODDS Pacific wrestling has used freestyle over the years for two key reasons since wrestling became a Far East tournament sport in 1976:

- Indigenous- and international-school teams that regularly compete with DODDS in Japan's Kanto Plain and in Korea wrestle freestyle.

- Experienced referees versed in FILA rules were more abundant, making it easier to find certified officials in all areas of the Pacific.

"If it isn't broke, don't fix it," said Yokota coach Ty Gaume, who's in the freestyle camp. "It's a great opportunity to learn a dif-

ferent format of wrestling, since we're stationed here in Japan and have an opportunity to see what the rest of the world does."

Justin Edmonds, who has coached 11 seasons at reigning Far East Division II champion Edgren, takes the opposite view, saying DODDS Pacific should be in alignment with DODDS Europe and the States.

"We should be taking care of our own," Edmonds said. "That's our responsibility to our kids. We'd be more consistent with rules used in the States. This is the only place where we're wrestling freestyle. All our [other] high schools, all of our colleges wrestle collegiate."

In a vote among ADs taken last school year, the result was "even," Hobbs said, and freestyle wrestling remained in place. Hobbs plans to gather input from coaches and ADs with another vote to be taken March 18.

The differences between the two styles vary greatly, coaches and referees said.

Freestyle favors big-point feet-to-danger throws, while folkstyle is mostly about technique. Folkstyle wrestlers can score escape and reversal points; not so in freestyle, where exposing shoulders to mat can cost even the wrestler on top points.

Some moves such as locking hands in an offensive position are illegal in folkstyle, so gut wrenches and leg laces would be out.

Coaches in favor of folkstyle say that sticking with freestyle sets back wrestlers who relocate to locales where folkstyle is used.

"That's not going to help our kids when they transfer back to the United States or Europe," Perry coach Kevin Peterson said.

On the other hand, freestyle in Japan and Korea allows wrestlers to see a different style and compete with wrestlers from other countries.

Referees would have to be found on bases or officials versed in freestyle rules would be asked to call folkstyle - something that



JAMES KIMBER/Stars and Stripes

Kinnick's Dre Paylor executes a two-hand hip toss on Seoul American's Tristan Johnson at 168 pounds during the Kinnick Invitational tournament. Locking hands in an offensive position is legal in international freestyle rules, which govern Pacific high school wrestling, but are mostly prohibited in collegiate folkstyle, which DODDS Pacific might follow after a vote of Pacific athletics directors on March 18.

‘It’s a great opportunity to learn a different format of wrestling.’

Ty Gaume
Yokota coach

‘We’d be more consistent with rules used in the States.’

Justin Edmonds
Edgren coach

the head of referees for the Kanto Plain, Takashi Noda, has steadfastly said he and his association would refuse to do.

Thus, referees among a transient American base population would have to be trained every couple of years, they would ship out and others would repeat the

process. "Between TDYs, deployments and augmentations ... finding officials may prove difficult," Gaume said.

Peterson doesn't buy that argument.

"If DODDS went to the officials associations and said we need referees and can you get them certi-

fied, they'd have them certified in three months," he said.

Should the March 18 vote go in favor of switching to folkstyle, "we'll put out the word as far in advance as possible and everybody will have to make the switch," Hobbs said.

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Top performances

Wrestling

Niko Manning, Kadena: Got her first victory in four bouts this season by pin, in 3 minutes 18 seconds over Zane Filles, helping spark Kadena to victory and a regular-season sweep over Kubasaki.

Brenden Becker, Osan: Was the only wrestler to win two bouts in the latest DODDS Korea wrestling tri-meet, winning by decision against Seoul American and by technical fall against Daegu.

Sky Phillips, Edgren: Won at 135 pounds, pinning Kinnick's George Calbert, and helping the

Eagles finish in second place, highest among Division II teams in the DODDS Japan finals.

Boys basketball

Kortez Hixon, Kadena: Hit the game-and tournament-winning shot at the buzzer, giving the Panthers their only lead of the game in a 63-61 win over Kubasaki in the final of the 9th Okinawa-American Friendship Tournament.

Nicholas White, Osan: Averaged 23.5 points in two games, and helped the Cougars snap a

two-game losing streak in the second one, winning 68-56 at Yongsan.

Jacob Lyle, E.J. King: Averaged 15.5 points over four games, each victories, powering the Cobras to their second straight Western Japan Athletic Association Tournament title.

Girls basketball

Shanissa Rasun, Humphreys: Played what coach Ashley Groob called "key minutes" down the stretch, grabbing 11 rebounds as the Black-

hawks got their first home win 41-38 over Osan and second straight overall.

Tiarrah Edwards, Kadena: Scored 10 points and grabbed 12 rebounds in the final, was named All-Tournament and helped pace the Panthers to their fourth straight Okinawa-American Friendship Tournament title.

Glenesha Berryman, Seoul American: Averaged 13.5 points and 7 rebounds in the last two regular-season games, both victories, as the Falcons closed the campaign with 11 straight wins.

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HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS EUROPE

New programs aiming for higher target

Kaiserslautern, Wiesbaden making progress, gaining support among established marksmanship teams

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The sport of marksmanship requires competitors to don cumbersome protective clothing, wear eye protection and adhere constantly to strict safety rules. It requires specific and expensive equipment, an expansive and meticulously-constructed venue for practices and meets and a substantial amount of institutional leadership and support.

All that said, the sport is remarkably accessible.

Fresh competitive teams at Wiesbaden, now in its third season of competition, and first-year program Kaiserslautern have expanded the school's DODDS-Europe reach. Both sports will be among the six teams competing in Saturday's European championship meet at Vilsack, joining reigning juggernaut Patch and stalwart contenders Ansbach, Hohenfels and Vilsack.

"We feel like we're a success just being there," Kaiserslautern coach, retired Lt. Col. Robert

Meyer, said at a recent practice in the school's new four-lane range.

There are a variety of factors to explain the immediate viability of the fledgling programs at Wiesbaden and Kaiserslautern, including each school's sizeable student population, a strong JROTC program from which to draw competitors, available sources for infrastructure and equipment and a general sense of support and acceptance from DODDS-Europe's more established squads.

But the teams still needed to succeed at the most basic level — talented shooters posting worthy scores. That too fell into place, thanks in part to the aptitude displayed by a gifted but inexperienced underclassman shooter at each school.

At Wiesbaden, junior Olivia Stecker has given the Warriors a boost in both leadership and points.

While deeply involved in JROTC, Stecker said she was "pretty much completely new"



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA L. DeMOTTE/Stars and Stripes

Kaiserslautern's Belle Cyriaque and Valeria Santos prepare for practice in their school's new four-lane range Tuesday afternoon.

to marksmanship prior to this season. But she had friends competing, including Wiesbaden teammate Max Petrunyak and DODDS-Europe frontrunner Maggie Ehmann of Patch, and she took their suggestion to take up the sport.

"It's a great sport. I've really come to love it," Stecker said. "I'm really happy I decided to try out."

Her quick proficiency with an air rifle made the new venture all the more fun. Stecker has cracked the top 10 at a handful of meets this year, including with a 273-point showing in last weekend's regular-season finale, and has set a goal of a top-10 finish Saturday at Vilsack. She said the continued support, advice and good-natured challenge offered by friends like Petrunyak and Ehmann has been "a really big factor" in her fast start.

"Every week I want to get better and better," Stecker said. "I'm really amazed at how fast I've been able to pick it up."

Wiesbaden's coach, retired Col. Darryl Hensley, had high praise for Stecker and her im-

pact on the program. He added that her role will expand even further next year when Stecker takes over as Commander of the Wiesbaden Warrior Battalion, a position from which she can steer more interested cadets towards marksmanship.

The launch of the Kaiserslautern program, meanwhile, has benefited from its own dynamic new talent.

Valeria Santos spent much of the last year waiting anxiously as Meyer guided the program down its path to mainstream DODDS-Europe competition. When the team was officially launched, Santos immediately signed up for her first competitive shooting experience.

"I was totally stoked," Santos said.

Meyer is equally happy to have her on the team, particularly given her outstanding early performance. Santos shot a 275 on Saturday, including a prodigious 96 points from standing position, considered the most difficult of the sport's three shooting positions ahead of prone and kneeling.

"She's a natural talent," Meyer said.

Like Stecker, Santos' initial exuberance only grew when she saw her efforts immediately rewarded with high scores. The Kaiserslautern junior never thought she was destined for sports stardom.

"I didn't expect it. I'm not the athletic kind," Santos said, admitting a tendency to "slack around" in her free time. "But I was like, wow, I can really shoot."

As promising as its been, the concurrent rise of Kaiserslautern and Wiesbaden marksmanship is currently limited by a nearly impenetrable glass ceiling. The Patch Panthers are all but shoosins to repeat as DODDS-Europe team champions on Saturday, and either Ehmann or defending solo champion Caelyn Miller is likely to keep the individual title in Stuttgart. In short, the program is presently occupying its own tier of DODDS-Europe marksmanship, and raised the bar even further this season with a stunning 1,443-point effort on Jan. 17.

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Kaiserslautern High School marksmanship team members, from left to right, Emily Vose, Marco Walter, Valeria Santos and Belle Cyriaque, hone their shooting skills from the standing and prone positions Tuesday afternoon. The team, in its first year of existence, will compete at the European championships on Saturday in Vilsack.

Top performances

Boys basketball

Otis Reale, American Overseas School of Rome: The Falcons are flying up the ranks of Division II contenders, and the high-scoring Reale has a lot to do with it. The sophomore guard scored 33 of his 35 points before halftime in Friday's 57-17 rout of Hohenfels, and went for an even 40 the next day in a 65-43 defeat of Ansbach.

D'Angelo Gallardo, Rota: The Admirals' first entry into the DODDS-Europe regular season doubled as a star turn for Gallardo. He averaged close to 25 points per game, including a 34-point effort Saturday, over four combined Rota weekend wins.

Terrell Staten, Naples: The slow-starting Wildcats couldn't catch up to Vilsack in a 68-54

loss on Friday, but Naples has a real tournament weapon in Staten. The sophomore guard scored a game-high 31 points, including five three-pointers, in defeat.

Girls basketball

Adrianna Ruffin, Lakenheath: The Lancers earned a gritty 43-38 overtime win at Kaiserslautern on Friday behind a dominant scoring effort from Ruffin. The senior guard poured in a game-best 25 points.

Amethyst Rorie, Ramstein: The Royal guard was productive on the boards and the scoreboard Saturday. Rorie posted a 12-point, 13-rebound double-double in a 51-24 defeat of Lakenheath.

Alison Cook, AOSR: The Falcon forward domi-

nated down low in two victories over German divisional rivals. Cook had 17 points and 14 rebounds in a 41-40 win over Hohenfels on Friday and 20 points and 24 rebounds in Saturday's 36-21 defeat of Ansbach.

Wrestling

Eli Spencer, Patch: The Panther standout made a case for himself as Europe's best wrestler with a dominant Saturday at Vilsack. Spencer cruised through the 195-pound bracket and emerged with a still-sparkling 18-0 record on the season.

Christian Rivera-Nales, Ramstein: The 145-pounder came away Saturday with a hard-won double-overtime decision over Vilsack's Austin

Weatherspoon. That win and ultimate weight-class top finish fueled a surprise upset bid as Ramstein fell three points behind reigning champion Patch at Vilsack.

Colten Menges, Lakenheath: The increasingly dangerous Lancers are spearheaded by this sturdy 220-pounder. Menges outlasted a strong field in Saturday's home meet, ranking as one Lakenheath's nine medalists in a home-mat triumph.

Marksmanship

Maggie Ehmann, Patch: The Panther ace led the way to another Patch victory on Saturday with a first-place showing in a six-team meet at Wiesbaden. Ehmann's 291 points included a perfect 100 from prone position.

SUPER BOWL

Last year's MVP Smith hardly gets on the field

By TIM BOOTH
The Associated Press

PHOENIX

Malcolm Smith stood out for always being in the right spot.

He was waiting to corral Richard Sherman's fourth-quarter deflection for the clinching interception in the NFC championship a year ago to send Seattle to the Super Bowl.

His eyes were up and focused on Peyton Manning's fluttering pass that fell into his arms for a pick six in the second quarter of last year's Super Bowl. And he hustled downfield to be in position to recover a fumble in the second half, all of which added up to the former seventh-round pick becoming an unlikely Super Bowl MVP.

Fast-forward 12 months with the Seahawks back in the Super Bowl and Smith doesn't stand out as part of this Seattle defense. Slowed by an ankle injury since the offseason, Smith is still an important part of Seattle's special teams, but he rarely sees the field on defense.

In Seattle's two playoff victories, Smith was in for two defensive snaps. Both were goal line situations in the NFC championship against Green Bay.

"It hasn't been difficult at all. I'm part of a team, that's my role. I don't see it as anything different," Smith said. "Of course it's hard not to get the reps in the game and be ready."

Smith didn't exactly become a household name after being named Super Bowl MVP. But he certainly became more recognizable.

He was the surprise choice, highlighted by his 69-yard interception return for a touchdown in the second quarter that gave Seattle a 22-0 lead over Denver. Nearly anyone on Seattle's defense could have

earned MVP honors after the 43-8 rout. Smith just happened to stand out a little more than anyone else.

Of course, being MVP came with all the trappings: The day after press conference; the parade with Mickey Mouse; a new truck. But for Smith, the only difference he felt was "people want to put mics in your face now."

"He's handled it great. I had no concern about that. He's had a lot of fun. It's been a great thrill to be able to represent as an MVP in that game. He got the truck and everything," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "He's worked like crazy and been there for us every step of the way."

Still, the return to the Super Bowl has not gone how Smith hoped. He was slowed throughout the offseason by ankle surgery that carried over into training camp. Smith never saw the practice field until Aug. 19.

"It didn't go as smoothly as expected and it's something I have to deal with," he said.

He played 52 snaps in Week 2 against San Diego, but three weeks later didn't see the field on defense in Washington. Smith started three games when All-Pro linebacker Bobby Wagner was out with a toe injury. One of the best games of Smith's career came in a Week 7 loss at St. Louis when he had a career-high 10 tackles and forced a fumble.

But when Wagner returned after Seattle's Week 11 loss at Kansas City, the Seahawks cut down on their rotations at linebacker. They went almost exclusively with K.J. Wright, Bruce Irvin and Wagner, and when Irvin became a pass rusher, Seattle would bring in an extra defensive back.

Smith didn't play a single defensive snap between Weeks 12 and 15. He was in for nine plays in Week 16 at Arizona and 16 plays a week later, but that was it.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Seahawks linebacker Malcolm Smith celebrates as he returns an interception for a touchdown against Denver in last year's Super Bowl. Smith is still an important part of Seattle's special teams, but he rarely sees the field on defense.

The decreased playing time has raised the question of Smith's future in Seattle as he'll become a free agent in the offseason. Smith seems realistic about his spot now

and potentially in the future.

"As far as being a reserve player, I'm a seventh-round draft pick," he said. "It's not like I came in here a first-round draft pick."

Pats' Gronk healthy and 'totally back to old self'

By HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Rob Gronkowski's ankle is fine. So are his forearm and knee. He's way past those injuries that ruined his last three postseasons.

You can't even hurt his feelings.

So when Seattle nickel back Jeremy Lane says "I actually don't think he's that good," the best thing not in the NFL says, simply, "Everyone's entitled to their own opinion."

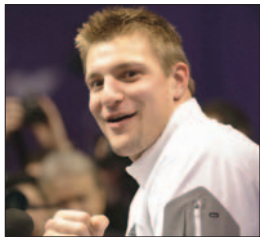
Of course, the 265-pound Gronkowski can change that opinion when the Patriots face the Seahawks and the 190-pound Lane in the Super Bowl on Sunday. Healthy again, he should be a handful.

"Ready to roll," he said Tuesday.

Gronkowski missed the AFC championship game the past two years with a broken left forearm in 2013 and a torn ACL and MCL in his right knee in 2014. In the Super Bowl in 2012, he was limited by a high left ankle sprain. He landed lost all three games.

The fun-loving but hard-working Gronkowski was back on a Super Bowl Media Day platform on Tuesday. His laugh and smile were present, just as they were three years ago. The questions were different.

"It feels good to be 100 percent healthy," he said, and not get a million questions like last time about my ankle."



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Rob Gronkowski, the Patriots' fun-loving tight end, said he's "ready to roll" during media day for Super Bowl XLIX.

Even when he got them, his sense of humor kicked in.

Asked before the 2012 game how he was feeling, Gronkowski said with a grin, "Good. How are you feeling?"

When another ankle question came up Tuesday, even though that body part hasn't sidelined him this season, he said, "It's very good. Thanks for worrying about my ankle."

That's Gronkowski. He keeps a light touch whether he's healthy or hobbling. His

upbeat character rubs off on teammates.

"The young man has had to deal with so much early on in his career and he has a great, great attitude and a great heart. He's got a unique joy about him," Patriots special teams star Matthew Slater said. "Even in the midst of that adversity, he was staying positive. He was focused on getting back on the field."

Gronkowski rehabbed obsessively, played in the opener and gradually made a greater impact. He caught just 13 passes, although three were for touchdowns, in the first four games. But in each of the next five, he had at least five catches with 100 or more yards receiving in three of them. He knocks down defenders and keeps on running.

"Totally back to my old self," said Gronkowski, who holds NFL season records for most touchdowns and yards receiving by a tight end. "Going into that Cincinnati game [six catches for 100 yards] in Week 5, everything just kicked in and I felt good," he said.

He has a touchdown catch in each of his two playoff games.

But now he must face the NFL's best defense. Seattle allowed the fewest points, yards and yards passing.

Depending on where he lines up — wide, in the slot or right next to the tackle — Gronkowski will be covered by different defenders. On some plays, it will be 232-pound safety Kam Chancellor. On others it could

be linebackers K.J. Wright or Bobby Wagner. And when the Seahawks play a zone defense, cornerbacks Richard Sherman and Byron Maxwell may get a crack at him.

No matter who covers him, Gronkowski won't back down.

He recalled that in high school when someone would deliver a big hit, he and his teammates would "go crazy."

He's taking that same passion for physical play into the most important game Sunday.

"It gets you amped up," Gronkowski said. "That's what's so special about (football) is how hard you can go and just take whatever you have built up and just go full speed at someone and level them. And someone can do that to you, so you've got to be ready at all times."

No wonder wide receiver Julian Edelman calls him "just a big goofball who has fun playing football."

Or why team owner Robert Kraft said Tuesday, "In our next life, a lot of people might want to be Rob. He never has a bad day."

Now, for the first time in four years, he has a healthy shot at having a good day in the final game of the Patriots season.

"It's definitely a tough experience" being hurt for big games, Gronkowski said. "Definitely don't take the game for granted anymore. It's an honor to be out there on the field with my teammates."

SUPER BOWL



CHARLIE REIDEL/AP

Seattle's Marshawn Lynch, right, talks to teammate Brandon Mebane as he makes his way off the floor Tuesday at the beginning of media day for Super Bowl XLIX in Phoenix.

Lacking enthusiasm

Media day: Lynch speaks, says nothing

By ROB MAADDI
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Marshawn Lynch smiled politely, waved at the crowd and answered every question the same.

"I'm here so I don't get fined," the Seattle Seahawks' star running back constantly repeated for five minutes before leaving the podium at Media Day on Tuesday. It's not clear if his plan will work.

About 200 reporters crowded around Lynch's podium for at least 15 minutes before he arrived. But the media-shy Lynch made it clear right from the start he wasn't saying anything except variations of his scripted answer:

Lynch set a timer on his phone and told everyone he showed up just to avoid a fine. Lynch caught a bag of Skittles tossed from Olympic gold medal gymnast Shawn Johnson and stopped to pick up a reporter's recorder off the floor before he walked away.

Lynch later spoke to "Entertainment Tonight" about his foundation, the "Fam 1st Family Foundation."

The Professional Football Writers of America was talking to the league about the session and Lynch had been apprised of a potential fine. He is also required to be at media sessions Wednesday and Thursday.

In November, the NFL fined Lynch \$50,000 for violations of the league's media policy in addition to collecting the \$50,000 fine that was imposed against Lynch for violations last season. The fine from 2013 was held in anticipation of future cooperation from Lynch.

"I'm fine sitting up here, but not everybody is comfortable with it so I don't think he should be forced to do it,"

Lynch has much more to say when the price is right. Insurance company Progressive and candy maker Skittles released commercials featuring

Lynch saying a bit more than his usual: "Yeah" and "Nope" and "Thanks for asking."

At Media Day last year, Lynch's reclusiveness became a major story. Lynch appeared for 6½ minutes, left the arena, and then returned to a "mixed zone" the NFL created for players not on podiums or in microphone-equipped speaking areas at the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

With the exception of briefly speaking with the NFL Network's Deion Sanders, to the Seahawks' website, and to American Forces Network, he did not deal with reporters that day.

Sanders, the Hall of Fame cornerback, tried again to interview Lynch, but got nowhere this time and left laughing. Teammates defended Lynch's behavior.

"This is who he is. I don't nippit or judge, so I just accept a person for who they are," All-Pro safety Earl Thomas said. "I just love who he is. He is so random."

Sherman even continued answering questions after the 60-minute session ended.

"I don't think (players) should be obligated any more than the commissioner is obligated to speak to the media," Sherman said. "I think that if players are going to be obligated to speak to the media then every one of the NFL personnel should be obligated to speak to the media weekly, and that's not the case."

"It's unfortunate, but I think that every team should be forced to present certain players, obviously a few of them. Obviously, if someone is uncomfortable in front of the media and uncomfortable answering questions, then you have to find a way to accommodate the NFL. This is a game; you find a way to accommodate everyone else who's uncomfortable."

Lynch was fined \$20,000 for making an obscene gesture during Seattle's overtime win over Green Bay in the NFC championship game.

Revis, Sherman get to settle feud

By BOB BAUM
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Darrelle Revis long reigned supreme among NFL cornerbacks.

Then came along this upstart Richard Sherman, who proclaimed himself the best and backed it up.

Now they get to state their case on the NFL's biggest stage — Revis' New England Patriots against Sherman's Seattle Seahawks in the Super Bowl.

They have a bit of history, these two — a Twitter feud from a couple of years ago. The gist of it: Revis was the proven pro and Sherman hadn't done enough yet to start crowing.

At Tuesday's media day, any animosity was buried. Each expressed respect for the other, although Revis referred to the fact that in Seattle's defense, Sherman plays only half the field.

"Sherman, he plays left corner and he does great," Revis said. "He's great at what he does. I'm not really knocking him on what he does. He's a playmaker and that's what he does for his team."

Cornerback, Revis said, is "by far" the hardest position to play in football.

The handful of those who excel at the position may bicker, Sherman said, but they share a common bond.

"There's a respect level between elite cornerbacks in the National Football League," he said.

"It takes a certain mentality to play at a high level in this game, to deal with the pressure, to deal with the intensity of being out there against the best athletes in the world. ... There's a definite admiration for their ability."

Sherman's a talker — opinionated, self-assured. He says he cares little what people think of him.

"It doesn't bother me too much, honestly," he said. "I kind of go to the beat of my own drum. ... I have my own way of doing things and it might not align with everybody, but I'm going to keep it that way."

Sherman stirred up trouble shortly after the Seahawks landed in Arizona when, referring to the fairness of the investigation into deflated footballs, he noted NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and Patriots owner Robert Kraft are good friends.

Sherman didn't back down Tuesday, saying that he found their relationship "interesting."

A small crowd gathered around

Revis on media day. Sherman drew a mob, and he revealed in it, answering bizarre questions — such as, what super power would he like to have while playing? (He would fly). He dined with a woman reporter, confidently showing his moves.

He said he was sure his girlfriend, due soon to deliver the couple's first child, would not have the baby on Super Bowl Sunday.

To the young Seattle star, media day was no chore.

Sherman earned a Super Bowl ring last year, in his third NFL season. Revis is playing in the big game for the first time in his eight years in the league.

For the first six, he played for the New York Jets, becoming "Revis Island." Twice he made it to the AFC championship game, but no farther.

Revis and the Jets parted ways after an injury-plagued 2012, and after a season in Tampa Bay he landed with the Patriots, the team he had fought without much success for so long.

"It's pretty awesome," Revis said. "I mean, this is what you play for every year. In the offseason you work hard to get to this point and when you get there, like right now, it's so surreal for me."

Sherman said his left elbow, hurt in the NFC championship game, "is feeling pretty good."

"It's been good all week," he said. "I'm done getting treatment."

And he shrugged off cornerback Brandon Browner's suggestion that he would tell his New England teammates to break Sherman's elbow.

"I think he was just caught up in the moment," Sherman said.

"He didn't mean any malice by it. It's one of these things, we know him as a person and sometimes he exaggerates a little bit."

Far be it for Sherman, of all people, to be bothered by a pointed remark from a foe.



Revis



ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Seattle cornerback Richard Sherman is regarded by most as one of the top two cornerbacks in the NFL, along with New England's Darrelle Revis.

SPORTS



Rose to the occasion

Point guard lifts Bulls in OT, ends Warriors' streak at 19 » **NBA, Page 26**

SUPER BOWL: MEDIA DAY

'I'M HERE SO I DON'T GET FINED'

Seattle's Lynch finally speaks... sort of » **Page 31**



Seattle running back Marshawn Lynch addresses the media.

BETTINA HANSEN, SEATTLE TIMES/TNS

Pacific: Wrestling format may change ■ Europe: JROTC boosts marksmanship

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